

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EPICTETUS

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by

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*A ship ought not to be held by a single anchor,
nor life by a single hope.—EPICETUS*

Preface

HISTORY

THERE ARE few known facts about Epictetus. Even his real name is unknown. The name, Epictetus, means "Acquired" in Greek. It is believed that he was born at Hierapolis in Phrygia (about 75 miles west of Angora, Turkey) between 50 and 60, A.D.

As a boy, he was a slave; but he managed to attend the lectures of the Stoic philosopher, Rufus. He was probably taken to Rome when he was a young man, where he was the slave of Epaphroditus.

It is told that when his master once put his leg in a torture, his philosophic slave quietly remarked,—“You will break my leg.”—When this happened, he added in the same tone,—“Did I not tell you so?”

Whether this story is true or not, certain it is, that in later life, Epictetus suffered from extreme lameness.

Eventually, he became free, and lived very frugally in Rome, teaching philosophy. When Emperor Domitian banished the philosophers from Rome in 90 A.D., Epictetus retired to Nicopolis in Epirus (in the northwestern part of modern Greece on the shore of the Ionian Sea), where he taught philosophy as before.

After Hadrian became emperor (117, A.D.), Epictetus

was treated with favor, but he probably did not return to Rome. The exact date of his death is not known.

Epictetus actually wrote none of his own philosophy. The entire record that we have of his thoughts are from the notes taken by one of his pupils, named Arrian.

Arrian divided the Discourses of Epictetus into eight books. In addition, he wrote an *Encheiridion*, or manual, containing many of the maxims of Epictetus. To these are usually added a number of sayings, which are usually ascribed to Epictetus. A letter that Arrian wrote to Lucius Gellius, briefly describing the Discourses of Epictetus is appended at the end of this preface.

TRANSLATION

The last four books of the Discourses have been lost and have never been found. The four remaining books and the *Encheiridion* were translated from Greek into English in 1758 by Elizabeth Carter (born in 1717; died 1806). Mrs. Carter's translation was rewritten in 1865 by Thomas Wentworth Higginson. It is Mr. Higginson's translation which I have used in writing this book.

The following is a quotation from the preface of Mr. Higginson's book:—

“I hesitated for some time whether to call this book simply a revision of Elizabeth Carter's translation, or a new one based on hers. The latter alternative was finally chosen, less in order to claim for myself any credit of hers, than to save her from sharing any discredit of mine. The enterprise was begun simply as a revision. But to revise any translation made a century ago is like underrunning a telegraphic cable: one may inspect a good deal of it, and find but trifling repairs needful; and then one may come to a point where a wholly new piece must go in. These substitutions multiplied so rapidly,—and even where the changes were slight, they

touched words and phrases so vital,—that the name I have chosen is really the least dishonest that could be given.

Newport, R.I., 1865 Thomas Wentworth Higginson."

PRESENT VERSION

I quote this preface of Mr. Higginson, because it expresses some of my own thoughts in presenting this book to the reader. However, I can make no claim of presenting a better translation of the Discourses of Epictetus, because I am no Greek scholar,—in fact, I know not a single word of Greek.

My only excuse for offering this version of the Discourses, is to give the present-day, hurried reader an opportunity of reading the philosophy of Epictetus with a minimum of effort.

I started out with the intention of simply grouping the thoughts contained in the Discourses into chapters under suitable headings, eliminating duplications, and other subject matter not related to the chapter heading, but without changing a single word of the Discourses, as translated by Mr. Higginson.

After the Discourses had been divided up into chapters according to the respective subject matter of each, it appeared to me that the meaning of certain passages could be brought out better by substituting a word here and another word there.

In addition, when the material for each chapter was all gathered together, it became necessary to introduce a few words, or a sentence to bind the various parts into a single unit.

The taking of one liberty led to another, until like Mr. Higginson before me, I found that I had something very different than my predecessor. Therefore, while I ac-

knowledge using Mr. Higginson's translation, I accept the responsibility for presenting this book, as it is.

To those Greek Scholars and admirers of Epictetus, who may read this book, I ask their tolerance. This book is not concerned with words, literally translated; but with thoughts. My aim has been to reproduce the thoughts of Epictetus, as I understand them, in plain, simple English, and in systematic order.

PHILOSOPHY

There is an apparent similarity between the philosophy of Epictetus and that of Jesus Christ. While Epictetus lived at a slightly later period than Jesus, it appears fairly certain that Epictetus never came into contact with any of the Christian teachers or with the philosophy that they taught.

From Epictetus's own words, we know that his great heroes were Socrates and Diogenes, especially the former. The outstanding qualities of Epictetus's philosophy are:—

1. The home-spun quality of its thought.
2. The avoidance of abstract, metaphysical generalities.
3. Its high ethical character.
4. The single-mindedness of its Stoic thought.

ARRIAN

As there would be no Discourses of Epictetus without Arrian, a brief biographical sketch of this student of Epictetus seems necessary. Arrian's full name was Flavius Arrianus. He was born of Greek parents in Nicomedia (about 50 miles east of Istanbul on the shore of the Sea of Marmara) about 96, A.D. The Romans appointed him Governor of Cappadocia (a district in eastern Turkey, Asia Minor, bordering on the Black Sea, and about the size of modern Portugal). This appointment was the first

important military command given to a Greek by the Romans. Arrian was also an historian and a philosopher. He died about 180.

To the reader, I suggest that this book be read slowly, preferably one chapter at a time. Like fine, old mellowed wine, it should be imbibed slowly, in order to derive the most benefit from it.

JOHN BONFORTE

Pueblo, Colorado
August 28, 1954

Letter of Arrian

Arrian To Lucius Gellius

Wisheth All Happiness



I NEITHER composed the Discourses of Epictetus in the sense in which things of this nature can properly be said to have been composed, nor did I myself produce them to public view, any more than I composed them. But whatever I heard from his own mouth, that I tried to set down in the very same words, so far as possible, and to preserve as memorials for my own use, of his manner of thinking, and his frank utterance.

These Discourses are such as one person would naturally deliver from his own thoughts, *extempore*, to another; not such as he would prepare to be read by others afterwards. Such as they are, I cannot tell how, without either my consent or knowledge, they have fallen into the hands of the public. But it is of little consequence to me if I do not appear an able writer, and of none to Epictetus if any one treats his Discourses with contempt, since it was very evident, even when he uttered them, that he aimed at nothing more than to move the minds of his hearers toward virtue. If they produce that one effect, they have in them what, I think, philosophical discourses ought to have. And should they fail of it, let the readers however be assured, that when Epictetus himself pro-

nounced them, his audience could not help being affected in the very manner he intended they should. If by themselves his Discourses have less efficacy, perhaps it is my fault, or perhaps it is unavoidable.

Farewell.

The Philosophy of Epictetus

I

GOD SAYS to me,—“Epictetus, if it had been possible, I would have made this little body and property of thine, free, and not liable to hindrance. And now, make no mistake:—it is not thy own, but only a finer mixture of clay.

“Since then, I could not give thee this, I have given thee a certain portion of Myself:—the faculty of exerting the powers of pursuits and avoidances, of desires and aversions,—in a word, the use of your Will.

“Take care of it, and make what is thy own to consist in this:—thou wilt never be restrained, never be hindered; thou wilt not groan, wilt not complain, wilt not flatter any one.

“Do all these advantages seem small to thee? Heaven forbid! Let them suffice thee then, and thank God.”

II

CONCERNING GOD, some affirm that there is no Deity; others, that He indeed exists, but is slothful, negligent, and without providential care; a third class admits both His being and His providence, but only in respect to great and heavenly objects, not earthly; a fourth recognizes Him both in heaven and earth, but only in general, not individual matters; a fifth, like Odysseus and Socrates, says,—

"I cannot be hid from Thee in any of my motions."

It is, before all things, necessary to examine each of these opinions; which is, and which is not rightly spoken. Now, if there is no God, wherefore serve Him? If there is, but He takes no care of anything, how is the case bettered? Or, if He both is and takes care; yet, if there is nothing communicated from Him to men, and therefore, certainly nothing to me, how much better is it?

A wise and good man, after examining these things, submits his mind to Him, Who administers the whole, as good citizens do to the laws of the commonwealth. He, then, who comes to be instructed, ought to come with this aim,—

"How may I in everything follow God? How may I acquiesce in the Divine administration? And how may I be free?"

FOR, HE IS FREE, TO WHOM ALL HAPPENS AGREEABLY TO HIS DESIRE, AND WHOM NO ONE CAN UNDULY RESTRAIN.

III

IF A PERSON could be persuaded of this principle as he ought, that we are all originally descended from God, and that He is the Father of all on earth and in heaven, I conceive he would never think of himself, meanly or ignobly.

Suppose Caesar were to adopt you, there would be no bearing your haughty looks. And will you not feel ennobled on knowing yourself to be the son of God? Yet, in fact, we are not ennobled.

Having two things united in our composition, a body in common with the brutes, and reason in common with God, many incline to the unhappy and mortal brutes, and only a few to that which is happy and divine.

IV

WHEN A PERSON asked Epictetus, how any one might be convinced that his every act is under the supervision of God, he replied,—

Do you not think, that all matters are mutually connected and united?

“I do.”

Well, and do you not think that things on earth feel the influence of the heavenly powers?

“Yes.”

Otherwise, how is it that in their season, as by express command, God bids the plants to blossom and they blossom, to bud and they bud, to bear fruit and they bear it, to ripen and they ripen. And when again He bids them drop their leaves, and withdrawing into themselves to rest and wait, they rest and wait?

Have then, the very leaves, and our own bodies, this connection and sympathy with the whole, and have not our souls much more? But our souls are thus connected and intimately joined to God, as being indeed members and distinct portions of His essence; and must He not be sensible of every movement of them, as belonging and co-natural to Himself?

Can you not retain a variety of arts and the memorial of ten thousand things? And is not God capable of surveying all things, and being present with all, and in communication with all?

Is the sun capable of illuminating so great a portion of the universe, and of leaving only that small part of it unilluminated, which is covered by the shadow of the earth, and cannot He who made and moves the sun, a small part

of Himself, if compared with the whole,—cannot He perceive all things?

“But I cannot,” say you, “attend to all things at once.”

Who asserts that you have equal power with God?

Nevertheless, He has assigned to each man a director, his own good genius, and committed him to that guardianship,—a director, sleepless and not to be deceived. To what better and more careful guardian could He have committed each one of us? So that when you have shut your doors, and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, but God is within, and your soul is within; and what need have they of light to see what you are doing?

To this God you likewise ought to swear such an oath as the soldiers do to Caesar. For they, in order to receive their pay, swear to prefer before all things the safety of Caesar; and will you not swear an oath to God, from whom you have received so many and so great favors; or, if you have sworn, will you not fulfill the oath?

And what must you swear? Never to distrust, nor accuse, nor complain at any of the things directed by Him; nor to shrink from doing or enduring that which is inevitable. Is this latter oath like the oath to Caesar? No. In the first oath persons swear never to dishonor Caesar: by the second never to dishonor themselves.

V

GOD IS BENEFICIAL. Good is also beneficial. It should seem then, that where the essence of God is, there too is the essence of good. What then is the essence of God? Flesh? By no means. An estate? Fame? By no means.

Intelligence? Knowledge? Right reason? Certainly. Here then, without more ado, seek the essence of good.

For, do you seek that quality in a plant? No. Or, in a brute? No. If then, you seek it only in a rational subject, why do you seek it anywhere but in what distinguishes rational things from things irrational?

Plants make no voluntary use of things, and therefore, you do not apply the term *good*, to them. *Good*, then, implies volition.

And nothing else? If so, you may say that good and happiness belong to mere animals. But, this you do not say, and you are right. For, however much animals have the use of things, they have not the intelligent use, and with good reason; for, they are made to be subservient to others, and are not of primary importance.

Why was an ass made? Was it a creation of primary importance? No; but, because we had need of a back able to carry burdens. We had need too, that he should be capable of locomotion. Therefore, he had the voluntary use of things added, otherwise he could not have moved. But here his endowments end; for, if an understanding of that use had been likewise added, he would not in reason, have been subject to us, nor have done us these services, but would have been like and equal to ourselves.

“What then? Is not an ass also a work of God?”

It is; but it is not a primary existence, nor part of God. But you are a primary existence. You are a distinct portion of the essence of God, and contain a certain portion of Him within yourself.

Why then, are you ignorant of your noble birth? Why do you not consider whence you come? Why do you not remember, when you are eating, who you are who eat, and whom you feed? When you are in the company of women, when you are conversing, when you are exercising, when you are disputing, do you not know that it is the Divine you feed, the Divine you exercise?

VI

YOU CARRY GOD about with you, poor wretch, and you know nothing of Him. Do you suppose I mean some external idol made of gold or silver? It is within yourself that you carry Him; and you do not observe that you profane Him by impure thoughts and unclean actions. If the mere external image of God were present, you would not dare to act as you do; and when God, Himself, is within you, and hears all and sees all, are you not ashamed to think and act thus,—insensible of your own nature, and at enmity with God?

Why then, are we afraid when we send a young man from the school into active life, that he should behave indecently, eat indecently, converse indecently with women; that he should either debase himself by slovenliness, or clothe himself too finely? Knows he not the God within him? Knows he not in what company he goes?

It is provoking to hear him say to his instructor,—“I wish to have you come with me.”

Have you not God? Do you seek any other, while you have Him? If you will always remember that God stands by as a witness of whatever you do, either in soul or in body, you will never err, either in your prayers or your actions; and you will always have God abiding with you.

If what the philosophers say of the kinship between God and man is true, what has any one to do but, like Socrates, when asked of what state is he a citizen, never to say that he is a citizen of Athens, or of Corinth, but of the universe?

For why, if you limit yourself to Athens, do you not further limit yourself to that mere corner of Athens where

your body was brought forth? Is it not evidently, from some larger local tie, which comprehends, not only that corner and your house, but the whole country of your fathers, that you call yourself an Athenian or a Corinthian?

“What then, does the character of a citizen of the universe imply?”

To hold no private interest; to deliberate of nothing as a private individual, but rather like the hand or foot, which, if they had reason and comprehended the constitution of nature, would never act except with reference to the whole body.

Hence, the philosophers rightly say, that if it were possible for a wise and good man to foresee what was to happen, he might cooperate in bringing upon himself sickness, death, and mutilation, being sensible that these things are appointed in the order of the universe; that the whole is superior to a part, and the city to the citizen.

He who understands the administration of the universe, and performs his proper part in it, may rightly call himself a citizen of the universe. This understanding should include a knowledge of the kinship between God and men. Because, from God, the seeds of our being are descended, not only to our fathers and grandfathers, but to all things that are produced and born on earth; and especially, to rational creatures, since they alone are qualified to partake of communication with God.

VII

ANY ONE THING in creation is sufficient to demonstrate the acts of Providence to an humble and grateful mind, for example, the production of milk from grass, cheese from milk, and wool from skins.

“Are these the only works of Providence with regard to us?”

And what speech can fitly celebrate their worth? For, if we had any understanding, ought we not, both in public and private, incessantly sing and praise the Deity and be grateful for His benefits? Ought we not, whether we dig or plough or eat, sing this hymn to God:—

Great is God,
Who has supplied us
With these instruments
To till the ground;
Great is God,
Who has given us
Hands and organs
Of digestion;
Who has made us
To grow insensibly,
To breathe in sleep.

These things we ought forever to celebrate; and to make it the theme of the greatest and divinest hymn, that He has given us the power to appreciate these gifts, and to use them well. But, because the most of you are blind and insensible, there must be some one to fill this station, and lead in behalf of all men, this hymn to God. And what else can I do, a lame old man, but sing praises to God?

Were I a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; were I a swan, the part of a swan; but since I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God. This is my business; I do it. Nor will I ever desert this post, so long as it is permitted me; and I call on you to join in the same song.

IN GENERAL, REMEMBER THIS, THAT UNLESS WE MAKE OUR RELIGION AND OUR TREASURE TO CONSIST IN THE SAME THING, RELIGION WILL ALWAYS BE SACRIFICED.

VIII

A PERSON who reasons well, understands and considers, that if he joins himself to God, he shall go safely through his journey.

“How do you mean join himself to God?”

That whatever is the will of God may be his will too, that whatever is not the will of God, may not be his.

“How can this be done?”

Why, how otherwise than by considering the workings of God’s power and His administration? What has He given me to be my own, and independent? What has He reserved to Himself? He has given me whatever depends on will. The things within my power He has made incapable of hindrance or restraint. But, how could He make a body of clay incapable of hindrance? Therefore, He has subjected possessions, furniture, house, children, wife, to the changes of the universe.

Why then, do I fight against God? Why do I try to retain that which depends not on will, and is not granted absolutely? But how? In such a manner and for such a time as was thought proper. But, He Who gave, takes away. Why then, do I resist?

Besides being a fool, in contending with one stronger than myself, I shall be unjust, which is a more important consideration. For, whence had I these things, when I came into the world? My father gave them to me. And who gave them to him?

Who made the sun? Who, the fruits? Who, the seasons? Who, their connection and relation with each other? And after you have received all, including your very self, from

another, are you angry with the Giver? And do you complain, if He takes anything away from you?

Who are you? For what purpose did you come? Was it not God Who brought you here? Was it not He Who showed you the light? Hath not He given you companions? Hath not He given you senses? Hath not He given you reason?

IX

As WHOM did God bring you here? Was it not as a mortal? Was it not as one to live with a little portion of flesh upon earth, and to see His administration; to behold the spectacle with Him, and partake of the festival for a short time? After having beheld the spectacle and the solemnity then, as long as it is permitted you, will you not depart when He leads you out, adoring and thankful for what you have heard and seen?

“But, I would enjoy the feast a little longer.”

So perhaps, would the spectators at Olympia see more combatants. But the show is over. Go away. Depart like a grateful and modest person; make room for others. Others, too, must be born as you were; and when they are born, must have a place, and habitations, and necessities. But, if the first do not give way, what room is there left? Why are you insatiable, unconscionable? Why do you crowd the world?

“Ay, but I would have my wife and children with me, too.”

Why? Are they *yours*? Are they not the Giver's? Are they not His, Who made you also? Will you not then quit what belongs to another? Will you not yield to your Superior?

"Why then, did He bring me into the world upon these conditions?"

Well, if it is not worth your while, depart. He has no need of a discontented spectator. He wants such as will share the festival; make part of the chorus; who will extol, applaud, and celebrate the solemnity. He will not be displeased to see the wretched and the fearful dismissed from it. For, when they were present, they did not behave as at a festival, nor fill a proper place in it; but lamented, found fault with the Deity, with their fortune, and with their companions. They were insensible both of their advantages and of their powers—the powers of magnanimity, nobleness of spirit, fortitude, and that which now concerns us,—freedom.

X

"FOR WHAT PURPOSE then, have I received these things?"

To use them.

"How long?"

As long as He Who lent them pleases. If then, they are not necessary, do not make an idol of them, and they will not be so. Do not tell yourself that they are necessary, when they are not.

This should be your study from morning till night, beginning with the least and frailest of things, as with earthenware and glassware. Afterwards, proceed to a suit of clothes, a dog, a horse, an estate; thence to yourself, body, children, brothers, wife. Look everywhere around you, and be able to detach yourself from these things.

Correct your principles. Permit nothing to cleave to you that is not your own; nothing to grow to you, that may

give you agony when it is torn away. And say, when you are daily training yourself as you do here, not that you act the philosopher, which may be a presumptuous claim, but that you are asserting your freedom. For, this is true freedom.

Say to yourself,—“I have placed my pursuits under the direction of God. Is it His will that I should have a fever? It is my will too. Is it His will that I should obtain anything? It is my will too. Is it not His will? It is not mine. Is it His will that I should be tortured? Then, it is my will to be tortured. Is it His will that I should die? Then it is my will to die.”

Having these thoughts and the following verse always ready at hand, we shall live according to the will of God and conformably to Nature:—

“Conduct me, O God, and thou, O destiny,
Wherever Your decrees have fixed my lot.
I follow cheerfully; and, did I not,
Wicked and wretched, I must follow still.”

XI

WHICH FACULTY is it that opens and shuts the eyes, and turns them away from improper objects? Is it the faculty of sight? No, but that of Will. Which is it that opens and shuts the ears? Which is it by which they are made curious and inquisitive; or, on the contrary, deaf, and unaffected by what is said? Is it the faculty of hearing? No, but that of Will.

What is it that makes use of all the rest? The Will. What takes care of all? The Will. What destroys the whole man, at one time, by hunger; at another, by a rope or a precipice? The Will.

Has man then, anything stronger than this? How is it possible that what is liable to restraint should be stronger than what is not? What has a natural power to restrain the faculty of sight? The Will and its workings. And it is the same with the faculties of hearing and speech. And what has a natural power of restraining the Will? Nothing beyond itself; only, its own perversion. Therefore in the Will alone is vice; in the Will alone is virtue.

XII

WHAT THEN, shall we dishonor the other faculties? Heaven forbid! It would be stupid, impious, and ungrateful to God. But we render to each its due.

There is some use in an ass, though not so much as in an ox; and in a dog, though not so much as in a servant; and in a servant, though not so much as in a citizen; and in a citizen, though not so much as in a magistrate. And though some are more desirable than others, those uses which are the least necessary, are not to be despised.

The faculty of eloquence thus has its value, though not equal to that of the Will. When therefore, I talk thus, let not any one suppose that I would have you neglect eloquence, any more than your eyes, or ears, or hands, or feet, or shoes.

But, if you ask me what is the most excellent of things, what shall I say? I cannot say eloquence, but a right Will; for it is this which makes use of itself and all other faculties, whether great or small.

Since it is Will which regulates all other things, it ought not itself to be left in disorder. But, by what shall it be regulated? Evidently, either by itself, or by something else. Well, either that too is Will, or something else su-

perior to Will, which is impossible. If it be the Will, what again shall regulate that? For, if this Will can regulate itself, so can the former. If we still require any further agent, the series will be infinite and without end.

If the Will be set right, a bad man becomes good. If it be set wrong, a good man becomes wicked. By this, we are fortunate or unfortunate; we approve or disapprove of one another. In a word, it is this, which neglected, forms unhappiness; and well cultivated, happiness.

“What then, is the Will, itself?”

THE WILL IS THAT FACULTY WHICH MAKES A RIGHT USE OF THE PHENOMENA OF EXISTENCE. THEREFORE, IT MAY BE CALLED THE EXECUTIVE FACULTY OF THE MIND.

XIII

EVERY art and every faculty contemplate certain things as their principal objects. The art of shoemaking, for instance, is exercised upon leather. The art of grammar is exercised upon articulate speech. But both of these arts are entirely distinct from the materials they work upon. And, neither is able to contemplate itself, and therefore, to approve itself or disapprove itself.

Thus, for instance, when you are to write to your friend, grammar will tell you what to write; but whether you are to write to your friend at all, or no, grammar will not tell you. The same is true with music with regard to tunes; but whether it be proper or improper, at any particular time, to sing or play, music will not tell you.

“What will tell, then?”

The faculty which contemplates both itself and all other things.

“And what is that?”

The Reasoning Faculty. For, it alone, is found able to place an estimate upon itself,—what it is, what are its powers, what its value, and do likewise for everything else. What else is it, that says, gold is beautiful, since the gold, itself, does not speak? Evidently, that faculty which judges of the appearance of things. What else distinguishes music, grammar, the other faculties, proves their uses, and shows their proper occasion?

Nothing but Reason.

For example, which of the faculties knows what itself is, and what is its true value? Which of them knows when it is to be used, and when not? Is it the faculty, itself? Did you ever see or hear the faculty of sight or of hearing to say anything concerning itself; or of wheat, or of barley, or of horses, or of dogs?

No. These things are instruments and servants, to obey that which is capable of using these objects as they appear. If you inquire the value of anything, of what do you inquire? What is the faculty that answers you?

Can the eye, when it is opened, do more than see? But, whether we ought to look upon the wife of any one, and in what manner, what is it that tells us? The Reasoning Faculty. Whether we ought to believe or disbelieve what is said; or, whether, if we do believe, we ought to be moved by it, or not, what is it that decides us? Is it not the faculty of Reason? Whether it be better to speak or be silent, or better to speak in this or that manner, whether this be decent or indecent, and the proper season and the proper use of each; what is it that decides for us, but the faculty of Reason?

Reason then, recognizing itself to exist among other faculties, all blind and deaf, and unable to discern anything but those offices in which they are appointed to minister and serve,—this faculty alone, sees clearly and distinguishes the value of all the rest.

XIV

YOU SEE, then, that Reason necessarily contemplates both itself and its contrary. Therefore, the first and greatest work of the philosopher is to try to distinguish the phenomena of existence, and to admit none, untried.

Even in money, you see what an art we have invented, and how many ways an assayer uses to try its value,—by the sight, the touch, the smell, and lastly, the hearing. The money-changer throws the piece down, and listens to the jingle; and is not contented with its jingling only once, but, by frequent listening to it, trains his ear for its true sound.

For, as a money-changer is not at liberty to reject Caesar's coin, but when once it is shown, is obliged, whether he will or not, to deliver his wares in exchange for it; so it is with the soul. Apparent good at first sight attracts, and evil repels. Nor, will the soul any more reject an evident appearance of good, than the money-changer will reject Caesar's coin.

Therefore, suppose we first establish the art of reasoning,—just as before the measuring of corn, we settle the measure; for unless we first determine the measure and the weight, how shall we be able to measure or weigh?

Thus, in the present case, unless we have first learned and fixed that which is the criterion of other things, and by which other things are learned, how shall we be able accurately to learn anything else?

A bushel-measure is only a piece of wood, a thing of no value, but it measures corn. Reason is of no value, in itself; but it distinguishes and examines, and, as one may say, measures and weighs all other things, including the mental faculties.

"Does Reason inform us that anything is superior to itself?"

How can that be? Would you have Reason to appear and bear testimony against itself? What does this mean? If this were true, then that which serves would be superior to that which is subservient; the horse to the rider, the dog to the hunter, the instrument to the musician, or servants to the king.

"What then, is Reason, itself?"

Reason is the art of judging the phenomena of existence.

THEREFORE, IT MAY BE CALLED THE JUDICIAL FACULTY OF THE MIND.

XV

WHAT IS the first business of one who studies philosophy? To part with self-conceit. For it is impossible for any one to learn what he thinks he already knows. We all go to the philosophers, talking at random upon negative and positive duties; good and evil; fair and base. We praise, censure, accuse; we judge and dispute about fair and base enterprises.

And yet, for what do we go to the philosophers? To learn what we suppose ourselves not to know. And what is this? Propositions and syllogisms! We are desirous to hear what the philosophers say for its elegance and cleverness; and some go to the philosophers with a view only to gain. Now, it is ridiculous to suppose that a person will learn anything but what he desires to learn; or make any improvement, in what he does not learn.

The school of a philosopher is a surgery. You are not to go out with pleasure, but with pain; for you do not come there in health. One of you has a dislocated shoul-

der; another an abscess; a third a fistula; a fourth a headache.

Am I, then, to sit uttering pretty, trifling thoughts and little exclamations, that when you have praised me, you may each of you go away with the same dislocated shoulder, the same abscess, the same fistula, and the same aching head, that you brought?

XVI

THE BEGINNING of philosophy, is a consciousness of our own weaknesses and inabilities in necessary things. We came into the world without any natural idea of a right-angled triangle, of a poem, or a half tone in music; but we learn each of these things by instruction. Hence, they who do not understand them, do not assume to understand them.

But, who ever came into the world without an innate idea of good and evil, fair and base, becoming and unbecoming, happiness and misery, proper and improper; what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done?

Hence, we all make use of these terms, and endeavor to apply our own impressions to particular cases.—“Such a one hath acted well, not well; is right, is not right; is happy, is unhappy; is just, is unjust.”—Which of us refrains from using these terms? Who defers the use of them till he has learnt their meaning, as those do, who are ignorant of geometry and music?

The reason of this is that we came into the world instructed in some degree by Nature upon these subjects; and from this beginning, we go on to add self-conceit. “For why,” say you, “do I not know what fair and base is? Have I not the idea of it?” You have. “Do I not apply this

idea to this particular instance?" You do. "Do I not apply it rightly, then?"

There lies the whole question. And here, arises the self-conceit. Beginning from acknowledged points, men proceed by applying them improperly to reach the very position that is most questionable. For, if they knew how to apply them correctly they would be, all but perfect.

XVII

WHAT IS IT to be a philosopher? Is it not to be prepared against events? Do you not understand then, that you say in effect,—“If I am prepared to bear all events with calmness, let what will, happen.”

Otherwise, you are like an athlete, who after receiving a blow, quits the combat. What then? Ought not each of us to say to ourselves upon every difficult occasion,—

“It was for this that I exercised. It was for this that I trained myself.”

God says to you,—“If you have gone through the preliminary combats according to the rules; if you have followed a proper diet and a proper training; if you have obeyed your Master, give Me a proof of it by your conduct.”

And then, will you faint at the very time of action? Now is your time for a fever. Bear it well. For thirst; bear it well. For hunger; bear it well. Is it not within your power? Who shall restrain you? A physician may restrain you from drinking, but he cannot restrain you from bearing your thirst well. He may restrain you from eating, but he cannot restrain you from bearing hunger well.

“But, I cannot follow my studies.”

And for what end, do you follow them? Is it not, that

you may be happy, that you may be constant, that you may think and act conformably to Nature? What restrains you, then, from keeping your Reason in harmony with Nature?

XVIII

WHO, WHEN HE is deliberating, prizes the deliberation itself, and not the success that is to follow it? If it happens to succeed, he is elated and cries,—“How prudently have I deliberated! Did I not tell you, my dear friend, that it was impossible, when I decided something, that it should not happen right?” But if it miscarries, the poor wretch is dejected, and knows not what to say about the matter.

Why then, are we still surprised, if, when we waste all of our attention on the mere materials of action; we are, in the *manner* of action itself, low, sordid, unworthy, timid, wretched, altogether failures? For, we do not care about the important matters, nor make them our study.

As the case now stands, we are eager and loquacious in the schools, and when any little question arises about any of the scholastic theories, we are prepared to trace its consequences to the very end. But, drag us into practice, and you will find us miserably shipwrecked. Let something of an alarming aspect attack us, and you will perceive what we have been studying, and in what we are exercised.

XIX

BECAUSE OF our neglect to study the proper valuation of the phenomena of existence, we always exaggerate, and represent things to ourselves, greater than the reality.

For instance, in a voyage, casting my eyes down upon the ocean below, and looking around me, and seeing no land, I am beside myself, and imagine that, if I am shipwrecked, I must swallow the whole ocean. Nor, does it occur to me that three pints of water are enough to drown me. Again, in an earthquake, I imagine that the entire city is going to fall upon me, but, is not one little rock enough to knock my brains out?

What is it then, that oppresses and makes us beside ourselves? Why, what else but our own impressions? For, what is it, but mere impressions, that distress him who leaves his country, and is separated from his acquaintances and friends, and place and usual manner of life?

When children cry, if their nurse happens to be absent a little while, give them a cake, and they soon forget their grief. Shall we compare you to little children, then?

"No, indeed. For I do not desire to be pacified by a cake, but by right impressions."

"And what are they?"

Such as a man ought to study all day long, so as not to be absorbed in what does not belong to him,—neither friend, place, nor academy, nor even his own body; but to remember the divine law, and to have that, constantly before his eyes.

And what is the divine law?

To preserve inviolate what is properly our own; not to claim what belongs to others; to use what is given us, and

not desire what is not given us; and when anything is taken away, to restore it readily, and to be thankful for the time you have been permitted the use of it; and not cry after it, like a child for its nurse and mama. For, what does it signify what gets the better of you, or upon what you depend?

WHICH IS THE WORTHIER, ONE CRYING FOR A DOLL, OR ONE CRYING FOR AN ACADEMY?

XX

THERE ARE things within our power, and there are things which are beyond our power. Within our power are the Will, and all voluntary actions; out of our power are the body and its parts, property, relatives, country, and in short, all our fellow-beings.

Now, the things within our power are by nature free, unrestricted and unhindered; but those beyond our power are weak, dependent, restricted and alien. Remember then, that if you attribute freedom to things by nature dependent, and take what belongs to others for your own; you will be hindered, you will lament, you will be disturbed, you will find fault both with yourself and with others.

"But are not health and strength and life good? And are not children, parents, and country? You talk unreasonably."

Let us then, try another point of view. Can he who suffers evil, and is disappointed of good, be happy? He cannot. And can he preserve a right behavior with regard to society? How is it possible that he should?

We are naturally led to seek our own highest good. If, therefore, it is my highest good to have an estate, it is

for my good likewise to take it away from my neighbor. If it is my highest good to have a suit of clothes, it is for my good likewise, to steal it wherever I find it. Hence, wars, tyranny, injustice, and invasions.

Now, when it is in our power to take care of one thing,—the Will,—and apply ourselves to it, we choose rather to take care of externals and to encumber ourselves with them,—body, property, brother, friend, child, and slave,—and, by this multiplicity of encumbrances, we are burdened and weighed down.

XXI

WHERE LIES GOOD? In the Will. Where evil? In the Will. Where lie things neither good nor evil? In things inevitable.

Do any of us remember these lessons out of school? Do any of us study how to answer for himself in the affairs of life as in common questions? We readily answer common questions correctly as,—

How much is two and two? Four.

Is it day? Yes.

Is it night, then? No.

But, in an affair of life, as when a bribe is offered you, have you learned to make the proper answer, that it is not a good? Have you exercised yourself in such answers as this one, or only in sophistries? Why do you wonder then, that you improve in those lessons which you have studied; while in those which you have not studied, there you remain the same?

In considering sensible phenomena, almost all persons admit good and evil to lie within themselves and not in

externals; and that knowledge is good and error, evil. But, in practice, what do we hear people often say,—

“Take care not to be sick. It is an evil.”

Just as if some one should say,— “Take care that the semblance of three being four does not present itself to you. It is an evil.”

How is it an evil, man? If I think as I ought to about it, what hurt will it any longer do me? If then, I think as I ought of poverty, of sickness, of political disorder, is not that enough for me? Why then, must I, any longer seek good or evil in externals?

These truths are readily admitted *here*; but nobody carries them home with him. The result is that every man is in a state of war with his servants, his neighbors, and with those who sneer and ridicule him.

Why?

Because there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what is our good and what is our evil.

XXII

THERE ARE three topics in philosophy, in which he who would be wise and good must be exercised:— that of the *desires and aversions*, that he may not be disappointed of the one, nor incur the other; that of the *pursuits and avoidances* in the activities of life, that he may act with order and consideration, and not carelessly; the third includes *integrity of mind and prudence*, and in general, whatever belongs to the judgment.

Of these points the principal and most urgent is that which reaches man's evil nature. This evil nature results from a disappointment of one's desires and incurring one's aversions. It is this which introduces disturbances, tumults,

misfortunes, and calamities. This is the spring of sorrow, lamentation, and envy. This renders us incapable of listening to reason.

The next topic regards the duties of life. For, I am not to be undisturbed by evil nature, in the same sense that a statue is; but as one who preserves the natural and acquired relations,— as a son, as a brother, as a father, and as a citizen.

The third topic belongs to those scholars who are now somewhat advanced. This topic is related to the other two,— that no bewildering temptation may surprise us, either in sleep, or in wine, or in depression.

These things were the study of Socrates; and by these means he always preserved the same mental balance. Yet, we had rather exercise and study anything, than how to become unrestrained and free.

“But, you philosophers, talk in paradoxes.”

And are there not paradoxes in other arts? What is more paradoxical than to prick one’s eye that he may see? Should you tell this to one ignorant of surgery, would he not laugh at you? What wonder then, that if in philosophy also, many truths appear paradoxes to the ignorant?

XXIII

THERE ARE some things which men confess with ease, and others with difficulty. No one, for instance, will confess himself a fool or a blockhead; but on the contrary, you will hear some persons say,—

“I wish my fortune were in proportion to my abilities.”

We readily confess ourselves fearful, and say,— “I am somewhat timorous, I confess; but in other respects you will not find me a fool.”

No one will readily confess himself intemperate in his desires, upon no account dishonest, nor indeed very envious or meddling; but many confess themselves to have the weakness of being compassionate.

What is the reason for all this? The principal reason is ignorance and confusion in what relates to good and evil. But different persons have different motives, and in general whatever they imagine to be base, they do not absolutely confess. Fear and compassion, they imagine, belong to a well-meaning disposition; but stupidity, to a fool. Offenses against society they do not admit; but in most faults they are brought to a confession of them chiefly from imagining that there is something involuntary in them, as in fear and jealousy.

And though a person should in some measure confess himself intemperate in his desires, he accuses his passion, and expects forgiveness, as for an involuntary fault. But dishonesty is not imagined to be involuntary, so, no one admits to being dishonest. In jealousy too, there is something they suppose involuntary and this likewise, in some degree, they confess.

Conversing therefore, with such men, thus confused, thus ignorant of what they say; and what are, or are not, their ills, whence they have them, and how they may be delivered of them; it is worth while, I think, to ask one's self continually,—

“Am I too, one of these men? What do I imagine myself to be? How do I conduct myself,—as a prudent, intelligent man, or as an intemperate, ignorant one?”

XXIV

Do you not often see little dogs playing with each other, so that you would say that nothing could be more friendly? But to learn what this friendship is, throw a bit of meat between them, and you will see.

Do you too, throw a bit of an estate betwixt yourself and your son, and you will see that he will quickly wish you under the ground; and you, him. And then, no doubt, you will exclaim,—

“What a son I have brought up! He would bury me alive!”

Throw in a pretty girl, and the old fellow and the young one will both fall in love with her. Or, let fame or danger intervene, and the words of Pheres to his son, for refusing to die to save the son, will be yours,—

“You love to see the light. Doth not your father?”

“You fain would still behold it. Would not I?”

Do you suppose that Pheres did not love his own child when it was little; that he was not in agonies when it had a fever, and often wished to undergo that fever in its stead? But after all, when the trial comes home, you see what expressions he uses.

Again, Paris was the guest of Menelaus; and whoever had seen the mutual proofs of good-will that passed between them, would never have believed that they would not remain life-long friends. But a tempting bait,— a pretty woman, was thrown between them; and thence came war.

One says,— “Well, but such a one paid me the utmost regard for so long a time; and does he not love me?”

How can you tell, foolish man, if that regard be any

other, than that he pays to his shoes, or to his horse, when he cleans them? And how do you know, that when you cease being a necessary utensil that he will not throw you away like a broken stool?

XXV

ANOTHER SAYS,— “Well, but it is my wife; and we have lived together many years.”

And how did Eriphyle, the mother of many children, live with her husband? But a bauble came between them. What was this bauble? A false conviction concerning a golden chain. This turned the wife into a savage animal; this cut asunder all love, and suffered neither the wife nor the mother to continue as such. Thus, she betrayed her husband.

Again, were not the brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, born of the same mother and of the same father? Were they not brought up, and did they not live and eat and sleep, together? Did they not kiss and fondle each other? So that any one, who saw them, would have laughed at all the paradoxes which philosophers utter about love. And yet, when a kingdom, like a bit of meat, was thrown betwixt these brothers, see what they say,—

POLYNICES: Where wilt thou stand before the towers?

ETEOCLES: Why askest thou this of me?

POLYNICES: I will oppose myself to thee, to slay thee.

ETEOCLES: Me too, the desire of this seizes.

Such are the prayers, they offer!

Whatever therefore, appears to be a hindrance to one's needs, be it brother, or father, or child, or mistress, or friend, is hated, abhorred, execrated; for by nature life

loves nothing like its own needs. This motive is father and brother and family and country and God. Whenever, therefore, God seems to hinder us, we vilify even Him, and throw down His statues, and burn His temples; as Alexander ordered the temple of Aesculapius to be burnt, because he had lost the man he loved.

For, wherever *I* and *mine* are placed, thither must every living being gravitate. If in body, that will sway me. If in my own Will, that; if in externals, these. If therefore, I place my personality in the Will, then only, shall I be a friend, a son, or a father, such as I ought to be. Because in that case, it will be to my interest to preserve the faithful, the modest, the patient, the abstinent, the beneficent character; to keep the proper relations of life inviolate.

But, if I place my personality in one thing and virtue in another, the doctrine of Epicurus will stand its ground, that,—

“Virtue is nothing, or mere opinion.”

When, therefore, any one identifies his interests with those of sanctity, virtue, country, parents, and friends, all these are secured. But, whenever he places his interest in anything else than friends, country, family, and justice, then all these give way, borne down by the weight of self-interest.

Therefore, be not deceived. NO LIVING BEING IS HELD BY ANYTHING, SO STRONGLY AS BY ITS OWN NEEDS.

XXVI

FROM THIS IGNORANCE it was, that the Athenians and the Lacedomonians quarrelled with each other, and the Thebans with both; the Persian king with Greece, and the Macedonians with both; and now the Romans with

the Getes. And, in still remoter times, the Trojan War arose from the same cause.

At present, therefore, when you see brothers having in appearance but one soul, do not immediately pronounce upon their love; not though they swear it and affirm, it were impossible that they should live asunder. For the governing faculty of a bad man is faithless, unsettled, indiscriminating; successively vanquished by different temptations.

Inquire, not as others do, whether the brothers were born of the same parents, and brought up together under the same teacher; but this thing only,—

In what, do they place their interest:— *in externals, or their own Will?*

If in externals, you can no more pronounce them brothers and friends, than you can call them faithful, or constant, or brave, or free; nay, nor even truly men, if you are wise. For, it is no principle of humanity that makes men bite and vilify each other, and take possession of public assemblies, as wild beasts do of solitudes and mountains; and convert courts of justice into dens of robbers; that prompts them to be intemperate, adulterers, seducers; or leads them into other offenses that men commit against each other,— all from the one single error, by which they risk themselves and their own concerns on things uncontrollable by Will.

Without proper morals, men may in many respects live as friends do; and drink and lodge and travel together, and even be born of the same parents. And, so may serpents, too. But, neither they nor you, can ever be truly friends, while your accustomed principles remain brutal and inhuman.

But, if you hear that these men really place good only in the Will, and in a right use of things as they appear, no longer take the trouble of inquiring, if they are father and son, or old companions and acquaintances; but boldly

pronounce that they are friends, and also that they are faithful and just. For, where else can friendship be found, but joined with fidelity and modesty, and the intercommunication of virtue alone?

Whoever, therefore, among you studies either to be a friend, or gain a friend, let him dig out all his false convictions by the root, hate them, drive them utterly out of his soul. Thus, in the first place, you will be secure from inward reproaches and contests, from vacillation and self-torment. Then with respect to others;— to every like-minded person he will be without disguise; to such as are unlike, he will be patient, mild, gentle, and ready to forgive them, as failing in points of the greatest importance; but severe to none, being fully convinced of Plato's doctrine, that,—

“THE SOUL IS NEVER WILLINGLY DEPRIVED OF TRUTH.”

XXVII

LET US examine some of the common misunderstandings concerning good and evil.

Such a one's son is dead. What think you of it? Answer: It is a thing inevitable, and therefore, not an evil. Such a one is disinherited by his father. What think you of it? It is inevitable, and therefore, not an evil. Caesar has condemned him. This is inevitable, and so not an evil. He has been afflicted by it and is unhappy. This is controllable by Will. That he is *unhappy* is an addition which every one must make for himself. Therefore, it is an evil.

People also say,— “Health is a good. Sickness is an evil.”

No sir. But what? A right *use* of health is a good; a wrong one, an evil. So that, in truth, it is possible to be a

gainer even by sickness. And, is it not possible by death and mutilation, too?

Do you think Menaecus, who sacrificed his life to gain victory for the Thebans, was an inconsiderable gainer by death? Did he not preserve his patriotism, his magnanimity, his fidelity, his gallant spirit? And, if he had lived on, would he not have lost all these? Would not cowardice, baseness, and hatred of his country, and a wretched love of life, have been his portion? Well, now; do you not think him a considerable gainer by dying?

If we train ourselves in this manner, we shall make improvement; for, we shall never assent to anything, but what the action, itself, involves.

XXVIII

ANOTHER STUDENT asked Epictetus:—

“But, what if when I am gone, my wife and children be taken captives? Is this not an evil?”

Whence do you conclude it such? Pray inform me, in my turn.

“Nay, but whence do you affirm that it is not an evil.”

Refer to the rules. Apply your principles. One cannot sufficiently wonder at what happens to the minds of men when they must act on a personal problem. When we would judge of light and heavy, we do not judge by guess, nor when we judge of straight and crooked; and in general, when it concerns us to know the truth of any special external problem, none of us will do anything by guess.

But, where the first and the principal source of right or wrong action is concerned, of being ethical or unethical, happy or unhappy,— there only, do we act rashly, and by guess. Nowhere, anything like a balance; nowhere, any-

thing like a rule; but something seems thus and so to me, and I at once act accordingly.

And yet, that seeming should not suffice me, and cannot, if I am to act properly. What are they called who follow every seeming? Madmen. Yet do we, then behave otherwise?

In this manner, ought every one chiefly to train himself. When you go out in the morning, examine whomsoever you see or hear, and answer as if to a question.

What have you seen? A beautiful woman. Apply the rule. Is this a thing controllable by Will or uncontrollable? Uncontrollable. Discard it then.

Again. What have you seen? One in agony for the death of a child. Apply the rule. Death is inevitable. Banish this despair, then. Has a consul met you? Apply the rule. What kind of thing is the consular office,—controllable by Will, or uncontrollable? Uncontrollable. Throw aside this, too. It will pass. Cast it away; it is nothing to you.

If we acted thus, and practised in this manner from morning till night, by heaven! progress would be made. Whereas now, on the contrary, we are allured by every semblance, half-asleep. And if we ever awake, it is only for a little while in the school; but as soon as we go out, if we meet any one grieving, we say,—“He is undone.”—If a consul,—“How happy is he.”—If an exile,—“How miserable!”—If a poor man,—“How wretched; he has nothing to eat!”

These miserable stupidities, then, are to be lopped off; and here is our whole strength to be applied. For, what is weeping and groaning? Stupidity. What is misfortune? Stupidity. What is sedition, discord, complaint, accusation, impiety, levity? All these are stupidities, and nothing more; and stupidities concerning things uncontrollable by Will; and therefore, neither good nor evil.

Let any one transfer these convictions to things con-

trollable by Will, and I will promise that he will preserve his balance, whatever be the state of things about him.

The soul is like a vase filled with water, and the semblances of things are like rays which fall upon its surface. If the water be moved, the ray will seem to be moved likewise, though it is in reality without motion. When, therefore, any one is seized with a giddiness in his head, it is not the arts and virtues that are bewildered, but the mind in which they lie. When this recovers its composure, so will they, likewise.

XXIX

IS IT POSSIBLE that all things which seem right to all persons, are so? Can things contradictory be right? We say not all things; but, all that seems so to *us*. And, why more to *us* than to the Syrians or the Egyptians; or any one else?

Therefore, what seems correct to each man is not sufficient to determine the reality of a thing; for even in weights and measures, we are not satisfied with bare appearance, but for everything we find some rule. And is there then, in the present case, no rule preferable to what seems? Is it possible that what is of the greatest necessity in human life should be left incapable of determination and discovery?

For this, I conceive, is that which, when found, will cure those of their bigotry who made use of no other measure but their own perverted way of thinking. Afterwards, beginning from certain known and determinate points, we may make use of general principles, properly applied to particulars.

XXX

A STUDENT said:— “But I would have that happen which appears to me desirable, whether it is so or not.”

You are mad, man; you have lost your senses. Do you not know that freedom is a very beautiful and valuable thing? But, for any one to choose at random, and for things to happen agreeably to that person’s desire, may be so far from a beautiful thing, as to be of all things, the most undesirable.

How do we proceed in writing? Do we choose to write the name of Dion as we will? No, but we are taught to be willing to write it as it ought to be written. And, what is the case in music? The same. And what in every other art and science? The same. Otherwise, it would be of no purpose to learn anything, if it were to be adapted to each one’s particular desire.

Is it then, only in the greatest and principal matter, that of freedom, permitted us to desire at random? By no means; but true instruction is this,— learning to desire that things should happen as they do.

And how do they happen? As God hath ordained. He hath ordained that there should be summer and winter, plenty and dearth, virtue and vice, and all such contradictions for the harmony of the whole.

To each of us, He has given a body and its parts, and our several possessions and companions. Can we flee from mankind? How is that possible? Can we, by conversing with men, transform them? Who has given us that power?

Mindful of these facts, we should enter upon a course of education and instruction, not in order to change the constitution of things,— a gift neither practicable nor

desirable,—but that, things being as they are with regard to us, we may have our minds accommodated to the facts.

XXXI

A STUDENT said to Epictetus:—

“But God does not order these things rightly.”

Why not? Has He not given you patience? Has He not given you bravery? Has He not allowed you to be happy while you suffer? Has He not left the door open to you, whenever circumstances do not suit you? Get out, man, and do not complain.

The essence of good and evil is a certain disposition of the Will.

“What are things outward, then?”

Materials on which the Will may act, in attaining its own good or evil.

“How then, will it attain its own good?”

By exercising right principles concerning these materials. If these things be true; and if we are not stupid or insincere when we say that the good or ill of man lies within his own Will, and that all else is nothing to us, why are we still troubled? Why do we still fear? What truly concerns us is in no one’s power; what is in the power of others concerns not us. What is there left to concern us?

“But you must direct me.”

Why should I direct you? Has not God directed you? Has He not given you what is your own, incapable of restraint or hindrance; and what is not your own liable to both restraint and hindrance? What directions then, what orders, have you brought from Him? Does not God instruct:—

“By all means guard what is your own. What belongs to others do not covet. Honesty is your own; a sense of virtuous shame is your own.”

Who then, can deprive you of these? Who can restrain you from making use of them, but yourself? And, how can you do it? When you make that your concern which is not truly your own, you lose that which is.

Having such precepts and directions from God, what sort do you still want from me? Am I better than He, or more worthy of credit? If you observe these precepts, what others do you need? Are not these His? Apply the recognized principles; apply the demonstrations of philosophers; apply what you have often heard, and what you have said yourself; what you have read, and what you have carefully studied.

This law hath God ordained:—

“IF YOU WISH FOR GOOD, RECEIVE IT FROM YOURSELF.”

XXXII

WHEN I SEE any one worried, I say to myself, what does this man's actions mean? Unless he wanted something or other not in his own power, how could he still be worried? A musician, for instance, feels no anxiety while he is playing for himself; but when he appears upon the stage he becomes worried, even if he plays ever so well.

For what he wishes is not only to play well, but likewise to gain applause. But this is not in his power. In short, where his skill lies, there is his courage; but in the matter which he neither understands nor has studied, there he is worried.

“What is that?”

He does not understand what a multitude is, nor what

the applause of a multitude means. He has learnt indeed, how to sound bass and treble; but what the applause of the many is, and what force it has in life, he neither understands nor has studied. Hence, he must necessarily turn pale and tremble.

I cannot indeed say that this man is no musician, when I see him afraid; but I can say something else, and indeed many things. First of all, I call him a stranger, and say, this man does not know in what country he is; and though he has lived here ever so long, he is ignorant of the laws and customs of the state, and what is permitted him and what is not; nor has he ever consulted a legal adviser, who might tell and explain to him the laws of the state.

But no man writes a will without knowing how it ought to be written, or consulting some one who does know; nor does he rashly sign a bond, or give security. Yet this man indulges his desires and aversions, exerts his pursuits, intentions, and resolutions, without consulting any legal adviser about the matter.

"How do you mean, without a legal adviser?"

He knows not when he chooses what is allowed him, and what is not allowed him; nor does he even know what is his own, and what belongs to others. Because, if he did know he would never be hindered, would never be restrained, would never be worried.

"How so?"

Does any one fear things that are not evils?

"No."

Does any one fear things that seem evil indeed, but which it is in his own power to prevent?

"No, surely."

If, then, the things independent of our own Will are neither good nor evil, and all things that do depend on Will are in our own power, and can neither be taken away from us nor given to us, unless we please, what room is there left for worry?

But we are anxious about this paltry body or estate of ours, or about what Caesar thinks, and not at all about anything internal. Are we ever worried not to take up a false opinion? No; for this is within our own power. Or, not to follow any pursuit contrary to nature? No, nor this.

When, therefore, you see some one pale with worry, just as the physician pronounces from the complexion, that such a patient is disordered in the spleen, and another in the liver, so do you likewise say, this man is disordered in his desires and aversions.

XXXIII

"BUT," SOME ONE said, "I am anxious to please Caesar."

For what? Do you know the rules by which one man judges another? Have you studied to understand what a good and what a bad man is, and how each becomes such? Why then, are not you, yourself, a good man?

"In what respect am I not?"

Because no good man laments, or sighs, or groans; no good man turns pale and trembles and says,— "How will such a one receive me; how will he hear me?" As he thinks fit, foolish man. Why do you trouble yourself about what belongs to others? Is it not his fault if he receives you ill?

"Yes, surely."

And can one person be at fault and another be guilty of that fault?

"No."

Why then, are you anxious about what belongs to others?

"Well, but I worry as to how I shall speak to him."

What then? Cannot you speak to him as you will?

"But I am afraid I shall be disconcerted."

If you were going to write down the name of Dion, would you be afraid of being disconcerted?

"By no means."

What is the reason? Is it because you have learned how to write?

"Yes."

And if you were going to read, would it not be exactly the same?

"Exactly."

What is the reason?

"Because every art gives a certain assurance and confidence on its own ground."

What else did you study at school? Have you learned how to speak? And for what purpose? Was it not in order to talk properly? And what is that, but to talk reasonably and discreetly and intelligently, and without flutter or hesitation; and, by means of all this, with courage?

"Ay, but Caesar has the power to kill me."

Then speak the truth, O unfortunate! And be not arrogant, nor take the philosopher upon you, nor conceal from yourself who are your masters; but while you are thus to be held by the body, follow the strongest. Go where you belong and remain there. For you are such a one of whom the ancients said:—

"HE CROUCHING WALKS, OR SQUATS UPON HIS HEELS."

XXXIV

HERE IS a man who is going to trial. Before you go consider what you wish to preserve, and in what to succeed. For, if you wish to preserve a mind in harmony with Nature, you are entirely safe; everything goes well; you have no trouble on your hands.

While you wish to preserve that freedom which belongs to you, and are contented with that, for what have you any longer to fear? For, who is the master of things like these? Who can take them away? If you wish to be a man of modesty and fidelity, who shall prevent you? If you wish not to be restrained or compelled, who shall compel you to desires, contrary to your principles; to aversions, contrary to your opinion?

The judge, perhaps, will pass a sentence against you, which he thinks formidable; but can he likewise make you receive it with shrinking? Since then, desires and aversions are in your own power, for what have you to be anxious? Who then, after all, shall hold sway over a person thus disposed?

How behaved Socrates in regard to these things? As it became one conscious of kinship with God. He said to his judges,—

“If you should tell me,— ‘We will acquit you upon condition that you shall no longer discourse in the manner that you have hitherto done, nor make any disturbance among either our young or our old people,’ — I would answer,— ‘You are ridiculous in thinking that if your general had placed me in any post, I ought to maintain and defend it, and choose to die a thousand times, rather than desert it; but, if God has assigned me to a station or method of life, I ought to desert that for you.’”

That, it is for a man to truly recognize his relationship with God. But, we habitually think of ourselves as mere stomachs and intestines and bodily parts. Because we fear, because we desire; we flatter those who can help us in these matters. And, we dread them, too!

XXXV

WHAT MAKES a tyrant formidable?

"His guards and their swords; they who protect his bed-chamber, and they who keep out intruders."

Why then, if you bring a child to him amidst these guards, is the child not afraid? Is it because the child knows not fear of the guards?

Suppose then, that one who knows the purpose of guards, and knows that they are armed with swords; and for that very reason, comes in the tyrant's way, being desirous on account of some misfortune to die, seeking to die easily by the hand of another. Does such a man fear the guards? No; for he desires the very thing that renders the guards formidable to others.

Well then, if any one being without an absolute desire to live or die, but indifferent to it, comes in the way of a tyrant, what prevents his approaching the tyrant without fear? Nothing. I must die, and must I die groaning too? I must be fettered, must I be lamenting too? I must be exiled; and what hinders me, then, but that I go smiling and cheerful and serene?

The tyrant demands,— "Betray a secret."

I will not betray it, for this is in my own power.

"Then, I will fether you."

What do you say, man? Fether me? You will fether my leg, but neither you, nor all your guards can restrain my free Will.

"I will throw you into prison; I will behead that paltry body of yours."

Did I ever tell you that I alone had a head not liable to be cut off? And will your own head remain on forever?

"And you will be thrown out unburied."

If I am identical with my corpse, I shall be thrown out; but if I am something else than the corpse, speak more accurately of the facts, and do not try to frighten me. These things are frightening to children and to fools. But if any one who has once entered into the school of a philosopher knows not what he, himself, is, then he deserves to be frightened; because he has not yet learnt that he is neither flesh, nor bones, nor nerves; but is that which makes use of these externals and regulates and comprehends the phenomena of existence.

XXXVI

LET US SUPPOSE that some one in authority passes this sentence upon you,— "I judge you to be impious and profane."

What has befallen you?

"Nothing."

Correct. Does he know, who claims the power of judging your case, what pious or impious means? Has he made it his study or learned it? Where? From whom?

A musician would not respect a judge, if he pronounced bass to be treble; nor a mathematician, if the judge decided that lines drawn from the center of a circle to the circumference are not equal.

Therefore, shall he who is instructed in the truth, respect an ignorant man, when he pronounces sentence upon pious and impious, just and unjust?

"But, oh! The persecutions to which the wise are exposed!"

Is it *here* that you have learned this talk? Why do you not leave such pitiful discourse to the idle, pitiful fellows?

But come and make some use of what you have learned. It is not reasonings that are wanted now, for there are books stuffed full of Stoical reasonings.

“What is wanted, then?”

The man who shall apply them. The man, whose actions may bear testimony to his doctrines. Assume this character for me, that we may no longer make use in the schools of the examples of the ancients, but may have some examples of our own.

XXXVII

THE TYRANT says,— “Ten men are better than one.”

For what purpose? For chaining, killing, and imprisoning men; for taking away an estate. Thus, ten conquer one, in cases wherein they are better.

“In what then, are they worse?”

When the one has right principles, and the others have not. Can the ten conquer in this case? How can they? If we were weighed in a scale, must not the heavier outweigh?

“How then, came Socrates to suffer such things from the Athenians?”

Foolish man! What mean you by Socrates? Express the fact as it is. Are you surprised that the mere body of Socrates should be carried away, and dragged to prison, by such as were stronger than he; that his body should be poisoned by hemlock and die? Do these things appear wonderful to you; these things unjust? Is it for such things as these that you accuse God?

Had Socrates then, no compensation for them? In what then, did the essence of good mean to him? Whom shall we regard, you or him? And what says he — “The tyrants may indeed kill me, but hurt me, they cannot.”

The tyrant can chain — what? A leg. He can take away — what? A head. What is there then, that he can neither chain nor take away? The free Will. Hence, the advice of the ancients,—

“KNOW THYSELF.”

XXXVIII

“WHAT THEN! Do you philosophers teach us a contempt of kings?”

By no means. Which of us teaches anyone to contend with kings about things of which they have command? Take my body; take my possessions; take my reputation; take away even my friends.

“Ay, but I would command your principles, too.”

And who hath given you that power? How can you conquer the principle of another?

“By applying terror, I will conquer it.”

Do you not see that what conquers itself is not conquered by another? And nothing but itself can conquer the Will. Hence, too, the most excellent and equitable law of God:—

The better shall always prevail over the worse.

“In what?”

In that, wherein it is better. One body may be stronger than another; many, than one; and a thief, than one who is not a thief. Thus I, for instance, lost my lamp, because a thief was better at keeping awake than I. But for that lamp he paid the price of becoming a thief; for that lamp he lost his virtue and became like a wild beast. This seemed to him a good bargain. So, let it be!

Then, some one takes me by the collar, and drags me to the forum. And all the rest cry out,— “Philosopher, now

what good do your principles do you? See, you are being dragged to prison; see, you are going to lose your head!"

And pray, what rule of philosophy could I contrive, that when a stronger one than myself lays hold on my collar, that I should not be dragged; or that, when ten men pull at me at once, and throw me into prison, that I should not be thrown there? But, have I learned nothing, then?

I have learned to know, that whatever happens, that if it concerns not my Will, it is nothing to me.

XXXIX

A TYRANT boastfully says,— "I am supreme over all."

If so, what can you bestow upon me? Can you exempt my desires from disappointment? How should you? For do you, yourself, never incur what you shun? Are all of your own aims fulfilled?

Pray, on shipboard, do you trust to yourself, or to the pilot? In a chariot, to whom but the driver? And to whom in all the other arts? Just the same. In what then, does your power consist?

"All men pay regard to me."

So do I to my desk. I wash it and wipe it, and drive a nail in it for my oil-flask.

"What then, are these things to be valued above me?"

No, but they are of some use to me, and therefore I pay regard to them. Why not?

Do I not pay regard to an ass?

Do I not wash his feet? Do I not clean him? Do you not know that every one pays such regard even to himself; and that he does it to you, just as he does to an ass? For, who pays regard to you as a man? Show me that. Who would wish to be like you? Who would desire to imitate you, as he would Socrates?

"But I can take off your head."

You say rightly. I had forgotten that one is to pay regard to you as to a fever, or the cholera; and for that reason there should be an altar erected for you at Rome, as there is for the Goddess, Fever.

Thus, Demetrius says to Nero,— "You sentence me to death; and Nature, you."

XL

RECENTLY, I HAD a conversation with a man, whose duty it was to request the governor of his province to reduce the taxes imposed on his village. He asked me in what manner he should present himself to the governor, and in what terms he should state the request of his fellow-villagers.

I said to him,— In the manner appropriate to the office of this governor, according to the established custom.

He replied,— "What then! Would you have me pay court to such a tyrant? Would you have me frequent his door?"

If reason requires it for your country, for your relatives, for mankind, why should you not go? You are not ashamed to go to the door of a shoemaker when you want shoes, nor of a gardener when you want lettuce. Why then, be afraid of the rich, when you have a similar want?

"Ay, but I need not be awed before a shoemaker."

Nor before a rich man.

"How then shall I get what I want?"

Why, do I bid you go in expectation of getting it? No, only that you may do your duty.

"Why then, after all, should I go?"

That you may have gone; that you may have discharged

the duties of a citizen, of a brother, of a friend. And after all, remember that you are going as if to a shoemaker or to a gardener, who has no monopoly of anything great or respectable, though he should sell it ever so dear.

You are going as if to buy lettuce worth a copper coin, but by no means worth a silver coin. So, here too, if the matter is worth going to his door about, you should go. If it is worth talking with him about, you should talk with him. But, if you must kiss his hand, too, and cajole him with praise, that is paying too dear. It is not expedient for yourself, nor your country, nor your fellow-citizens, nor your friends, to destroy what constitutes the good citizen and the friend.

"But, I will appear not to have set heartily about the business, if I should fail thus."

What, have you forgotten why you went? Do you not know that a wise and good man does nothing for appearance, but everything for the sake of having acted well?

"What advantage is it then, to me, to have acted well?"

What advantage is it to one who writes down the name, of Dion without blunder? The having written it.

"Is there no reward, then?"

Why do you seek any greater reward than the doing of what is fair and just? And yet, if you were a victor at Olympia, you would desire nothing else, but think it good enough to be crowned victor. Does it appear so small and worthless a thing to be just, good and happy? Has your study of philosophy meant nothing to you?

XLI

SOME ONE scatters nuts and figs. Children scramble and quarrel for them; but not men, for they think them trifles. But, if any one should scatter stones not even children

would scramble for them. Provinces are being distributed; let children look to it. Money, let children look to it. Military command, a consulship; let children scramble for them.

"What then, is to be done?"

If you do not receive these things, while they are being distributed, do not trouble yourself about them. But, if a fig should fall into your lap, take it and eat it; for one may pay so much regard even to a fig. But, if I am to stoop and throw down a rival, or be thrown by another, and flatter those who succeed, a fig is not worth this. Nor, is any other of those things which are not really good, which the philosophers have persuaded me not to esteem as good.

To-day, a person was talking to me about applying for a high office in Rome. I said to him,— Let the thing alone, friend. You will be at great expense for nothing.

"But my name," said he, "will be written in the annals."

Will you stand by then, and tell those who read them,— "I am the person whose name is written here?" And even if you could tell every one so now, what will you do when you are dead?

"My name will remain."

Write it upon a stone, and it will remain just as well.

"But I shall wear a crown of gold."

If your heart is quite set upon a crown, make one of roses, and put it on. It will make the prettier appearance.

XLII

IS ANY ONE preferred before you at an entertainment; or in courtesies, or in confidential discourse?

If these things are good, you ought to rejoice that another has them; and if they are evil, do not grieve that

you have them not. Remember that you cannot be permitted to rival others in externals, without using the same means of obtaining them, that the others used. For, how can he who will not haunt the door of any man, will not attend him, and will not praise him, have an equal share with him who does these things?

You are unjust then, and unreasonable, if you are unwilling to pay the price for which these things are sold, and would have them for nothing.

For how much are lettuces sold? A copper coin. If another then, paying the coin, takes the lettuce; and you, not paying the money, go without the lettuce, do not imagine that the other has gained any advantage over you. For, as he has the lettuce, so have you the money, which you did not give.

So, in the present case. You have not been invited to such a person's entertainment, because you have not paid him the price for which a supper is sold. It is sold for praise; it is sold for attendance. Give him then, the value, if it be to your advantage. But, if you would, at the same time not pay the one, and yet receive the other, you are unreasonable and foolish.

Have you nothing then, in place of the supper? Yes, indeed you have; not to praise him, whom you do not like to praise nor to bear the insolence of his lackeys.

XLIII

"WELL, OTHERS will get more, and be preferred to me."

Well, and what is more reasonable than that they who take pains for any one thing should get most in that particular endeavor in which they have taken pains? They have taken pains for power; you, for right principles. They,

for riches; you, for a proper use of the phenomena of existence.

See, whether they have the advantage of you in that for which you have taken pains, and which they neglect; if they judge better concerning the natural bounds and limits of things; if they preserve a becoming behavior as men, as sons, as parents, and so on with the other relationships of life.

No; but you say,—“Since I take care to have right principles, it is also reasonable that I should excel in external matters as well as in those concerning the Will.”

Give up to others the things in which they have taken more pains than you. Else, it is just as if, because you have right principles, you should expect to aim an arrow better than an archer, or to forge better than a blacksmith. In that case, cease to take pains about principles, and apply yourself to those things which you wish to possess. And then, begin crying, if you do not succeed; for you will deserve to cry.

But now, you claim that you are engaged and absorbed in philosophic studies. They say well, that no man can be of two trades. One man, as soon as he rises and goes out, seeks to whom he may pay compliments, whom he may flatter, to whom he may send a present; how he may please the favorite; how, by doing mischief to one, he may oblige another.

Since, there is so much difference then, between your desires, your actions, and your wishes and those of such worldly men; would you, yet have an equal share with them in those things about which you have not taken pains, and they have? And do you wonder after all, and are you out of humor, if they pity you?

But, they are not out of humor with you, if you pity them. Why? Because they are convinced that they are in possession of their proper good; but, you are not convinced that you are.

Hence, you are not contented with your own condition, but desire theirs. Whereas, they are contented with theirs, and do not desire yours. For, if you were really convinced that it is you who are in possession of what is good, and that they are mistaken, you would not so much as think of what they say about you.

KNOW THAT,—THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A VULGAR PERSON IS THAT HE NEVER LOOKS FOR EITHER HELP OR HARM FROM HIMSELF, BUT ONLY FROM EXTERNALS; WHEREAS, THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A PHILOSOPHER IS THAT HE LOOKS TO HIMSELF FOR ALL HELP OR HARM.

XLIV

A SCHOLAR says,—“Such a one has a school, and why should I not have one, too?”

Foolish man, these things are not brought about carelessly and haphazardly; but there must be a fit age, and a method of life, and a guiding God. It is as though, you set yourself up as a physician, provided with nothing but medicines, and said,—

“Why, such a physician has medicines for the eyes, and I have the same medicines; therefore, am I not a physician too?”

Have you also then, a faculty for making use of these medicines? Do you know when and how and to whom, they will be of service?

And so, in philosophy, why do you act haphazardly? Why are you careless in things of the greatest importance? Why do you attempt a matter unsuitable to you? Leave it to those who can perform it and do it honor. Do not you too, bring a scandal upon philosophy by your acts; nor be one of those who cause philosophy, itself, to be slandered.

But, if mere theorems delight you, sit quietly and turn them over by yourself; but never call yourself a philosopher, nor suffer another to call you so: but say,—

“You are mistaken; for my desires are not different from what they were; nor my pursuits directed to other objects; nor my assents otherwise given; nor have I at all made any progress from my former condition in the use of things as they appear.”

Think and speak thus of yourself, if you would think of yourself as you ought. If not, act at random, and do as you now do; for it is appropriate to you.

XLV

YOU ARE WRETCHED and discontented. If you are alone, you term it a desert; and, if with men, you call them cheats and robbers. You find fault too, with your parents, your children, your brothers, and your neighbors.

Whereas, you ought, if you live alone, to call that repose and freedom; and when you are in company, to call that an assembly and a festival,—and thus take all things contentedly.

“What then, is the punishment of those who do not so accept them?”

To be,—as they are.

XLVI

HERE IS a man who is vexed because he cannot sit in the amphitheatre in pomp and ceremony. Listen to what he says,—

"I want to sit where the senators do."

Do you not see that by this you inconvenience and torment yourself?

"Why, how else, shall I see the show advantageously?"

Do not insist on seeing it, O man! and you will not be inconvenienced. Why do you vex yourself? Or, wait a little while; and when the show is over, go sit in the senators' places and sun yourself.

Why should any one person envy another? Why should he be impressed with awe by those who have great possessions, or are placed in high rank,—especially, if they are brutal and ill-tempered?

If you see a viper, or an asp, or a scorpion, in a box of ivory or gold, you do not love it, or think it beautiful because of the magnificence of the material in which it is enclosed; but you shun it and detest it, because of its pernicious nature.

So likewise, when you see evil lodged in the midst of wealth or power, bursting with the swelling pride of fortune; be not struck by the splendor of the material with which it is surrounded; but despise it for the base alloy of its actions.

As you would not wish to sail in a large, elegant, gilded ship, and sink; so neither is it desirable to inhabit a grand and sumptuous house, and be in tumult.

What can the unprincipled mighty do for us? The things which they can do, we do not regard; the things about which we are concerned, they cannot reach.

XLVII

SOME ONE inquired,—“How is it possible to eat according to the Divine acceptance?”

If you eat with justice, and with gratitude, and fairly,

and temperately, and decently, you eat according to the Divine acceptance. And, if you call for hot water, and your servant does not hear you; or if he does, brings only warm water; or perhaps, is not to be found at all, then abstain from anger or petulance.

“But, how is it possible to bear such things?”

Slavish man! Will you not bear with your own brother, who has God for his Father, a son from the same stock, and of the same high descent as you? But, if you chance to be placed in some superior station, will you presently set yourself up as a tyrant? Will you not remember who you are, and over whom you bear rule,—that your subjects are by nature your relations, your brothers; that they are the offspring of God?

“But I have them by right of purchase, and not they, me.”

Do you see what it is you value? Your values look downward towards the earth, and what is lower than earth, the unjust laws of men long dead. But, up towards the divine laws, you never turn your eyes.

XLVIII

HERE IS A slave, who wishes immediately to be set free. Do you think that, it is because he is desirous of paying his fee of freedom to the officer? No, but because he fancies that, for want of acquiring his freedom, he has hitherto lived under restraint and unprosperously.

“If I am once free,” he says, “it is all prosperity. I need not care for any one; I can speak to all as being their equal and on a level with them. I can come and go when and how I will.”

He is at last made free. Presently, having nowhere to

eat, he seeks whom he may flatter, with whom he may sup. Either, he obtains admission to some great man's table through flattery; or perhaps, he grows rich and yearns to grow richer. So, he submits to a slavery much worse than the former.

He prays,—“If I can only be promoted to equestrian rank, I shall live in the utmost prosperity and happiness.”

In order to obtain this rank, he first deservedly suffers; and as soon as he has obtained it, it is all the same again.

“But then,” he says, “If I do but get a military command, I shall be delivered from all my troubles.”

He gets a military command. He suffers as much as the vilest rogue of a slave; and nevertheless, he asks for a second command and a third. And, when he is made a senator, he has put on the finishing touch, and he is a slave indeed. Finally, he comes into the public assembly, where he undergoes his finest and most splendid slavery.

Eventually, with old age come loss of power and solitude. Then in remorse, he wishes for slavery again, crying,—

“What harm did it do me? Another clothed me, another shod me, another fed me, another took care of me when I was sick. It was in but a few things, by way of return, that I used to serve my master. But now, miserable wretch! What do I suffer, in being a slave to many, instead of to one?”

XLIX

A RICH STUDENT asks,—“What is our nature?”

To be free, noble-spirited, and modest. For what other animal blushes? What other has the knowledge of shame? But pleasure must be subject to these virtues, as an at-

tendant and handmaid, and to keep us constant in our natural actions.

"But I am rich and want for nothing."

Then, why do you pretend to philosophize? Your gold and silver plate is enough for you. What need have you of principles?

"Well, I am Judge of the Greeks."

Do you know how to judge? Who has imparted this knowledge to you?

"Caesar has given me a commission."

Let him give you a commission to judge of music; what good will it do you? But, how were you made a judge? Whose hand have you kissed,—that of Symphorus, or Numenius? Before whose door have you slept? To whom have you sent presents? After all, do you not perceive that the office of judge puts you in the same rank with Numenius?

"But I can throw whom I please into prison."

So you may a stone.

"But I can beat whom I will, too."

So you may an ass. This is no way of governing men. Govern us like reasonable creatures. Show us what is best for us, and we will do it. Show us what is otherwise, and we will avoid it.

Like Socrates, make us imitators of yourself. He was properly a governor of men, who controlled their desires and aversions, their pursuits, and their avoidances. No; but you command,—“Do this; do not do that, or I will throw you into prison.” This is not a government for reasonable creatures; but,—“Do as God has commanded, or you will be punished, and you will be the loser.”

“What shall I lose?”

Simply your own right action, your fidelity, honor, and decency. You can find no losses greater than these.

L

A MAN came to Epictetus saying,—“To-morrow, I go before the judges accused of treason. Advise me how to act that I may preserve my dignity and yet avoid offending my judges, who may confiscate my property and my life, or banish me to Gyaros.”

Before you go to trial, consider what you wish to preserve and in what you wish to succeed. If you wish to preserve a mind in harmony with Nature, you are entirely safe; but if you wish to retain possession of outward things too, your body, your estate, your dignity; I advise you immediately prepare yourself by every means; and besides, consider the mental disposition of your judges and your prosecutor.

If it be necessary to embrace their knees, do so; if to weep, weep; if to groan, groan. For, when you have once made yourself a slave to externals, be a slave wholly. Do not struggle, and be alternately willing and unwilling, but be simply and thoroughly the one or the other,—free, or slave; instructed, or ignorant; a game-cock or a craven; either bear to be beaten until you die, or give out at once; and do not be soundly beaten first, and then give out at the last.

If the latter alternative is shameful to you, learn immediately to distinguish where good and evil lie. They lie where truth likewise lies. Where truth and Nature dictate, there exercise caution and courage.

Be content not to entreat; yet do not proclaim that you will not entreat; unless it be a proper time to provoke your judges intentionally, as in the case of Socrates. But, if you are preparing such a speech as his, what do you wait for?

Why do you consent to be tried? For, if you wish to be hanged, be patient and the gibbet will come. But if you choose rather to consent, and make your defense as well as you can, all the rest is to be ordered accordingly, with a due regard, however, to the preservation of your own proper character.

Remember the rules. He who has lost what is properly his own,—his Reason,—ought to receive public condolences. But he who has lost paternal possessions, an estate or slaves, has lost only external things, which never belonged to him.

For this reason, it is absurd to call upon me for specific advice. How shall I know what to advise you? Ask me rather to teach you to accommodate yourself to whatever may be the event.

The former is just as if an illiterate person should say,—“Teach me how to write down some name that is proposed to me;”—and I show him how to write the name of Dion. And then, another comes and asks him to write the name, not of Dion, but of Theon. What will be the consequence? What will he write? Whereas, if he made writing his study, he is already prepared for whatever question may be asked.

And, so in your case. How can I advise you to act in a certain specific manner? For, if the actual case should suggest something else, what will you say, or how will you act? Remember, then, the general rule, and you will need no special suggestions; but, if you are absorbed in externals; you must necessarily be tossed up and down, according to the will of your master.

LI

TO A reasonable creature, that alone is insupportable, which is unreasonable; but everything reasonable may be supported. For example, blows in themselves are not insupportable.

“How so?”

See how the Spartans bear whipping, after they have been taught that it is a reasonable part of their training. Hanging is not insupportable; for, as soon as a man has taken it into his head that it is reasonable, he goes and hangs himself. In short, we shall find by observation that no creature is oppressed by anything so much, as by what appears to him to be unreasonable; nor on the other hand, attracted to anything so strongly, as to what appears to him to be reasonable.

But, it happens that different things are reasonable and unreasonable, as well as good and bad, advantageous and disadvantageous, to different persons. On this account, chiefly, we stand in need of a liberal education, to teach us to adapt the preconceptions of reasonable and unreasonable to particular cases, conformably to Nature.

But to judge of reasonable and unreasonable, we make use not only of a due estimation of things without us, but of what relates to each person's particular character.

Thus, it is reasonable for one man to submit to a menial office, who considers only, that if he does not submit to it, he shall be whipt and lose his dinner; but if he does his job, he has nothing hard or disagreeable to suffer. Whereas, to another it appears insupportable, not only to submit to such an office himself, but to respect any one else who does.

If you ask me then, whether you shall do this menial office or not, I will tell you it is a pleasanter thing to get a dinner than not, and a greater disgrace to be whipt than not to be whipt. So, if you measure yourself by these things, go and do your office.

“Ay, but this is not suitable to my character.”

It is you who are to consider that, not I. IT IS YOU WHO KNOW YOURSELF: FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE SELL THEMSELVES AT DIFFERENT PRICES.

LII

WHAT ADVANTAGE does a wrestler gain from him with whom he exercises himself before combat? The greatest. And just in the same manner, I exercise myself with this man. He exercises me in patience, in gentleness, in humility. Am I to suppose, then, that I gain an advantage from him who exercises my neck, and puts my back and shoulders in order; so that the trainer may well bid me grapple an opponent with both hands, and the heavier he is, the better for me; but yet, it is no advantage for me when I am exercised in gentleness of temper!

For instance, what is it to be reviled? Whatever, we make of it. For, stand by a stone and revile it. What will you get by it? Nothing. If you, therefore, would listen as a stone, what would your reviler gain? Nothing. But, if the reviler has the weakness of the reviled for a vantage-ground, then he carries his point.

Remember this saying for it is universally true,—

BY OUR OWN PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS, WE DISTRESS AND
TORMENT OURSELVES.

LIII

THIS IT IS to know how to gain an advantage from men. Is my neighbor a bad one? He is so to himself, but a good one to me. He exercises my good temper, my moderation. Is my father bad? To himself; but not to me.

Again, credulous people say,—“This is the rod of Hermes. Touch with it whatever you please, and it will turn to gold.”

No; but bring to me whatever you please, and I will turn it into *good*. Bring sickness, death, poverty, reproach, trial for life. All these, by the rod of Hermes, shall I turn to good advantage.

“What will you make of death?”

Why, what but a means of showing you, what that man is who knows and follows the will of nature.

“What will you make of sickness?”

I will show you its nature. I will make a good figure in it. I will be composed and happy. I will not beseech my physician, nor yet, will I pray for death.

What need you to ask further? Whatever you give me I will make that event happy, fortunate, respectable, and acceptable.

LIV

WHEN ANY alarming news is brought you, always have it ready in mind, that no news can be brought to you concerning what is within the power of your own Will. Can

any one bring you news that your opinions or desires are ill conducted? By no means; only that somebody speaks ill of you, or that such a person is dead. And, what are these things to *you*, then?

Perhaps, you may be told, that your father is forming some conspiracy against you. Against what? Against your Will? How can he? No, but against your estate. You are very safe; this is not against *you*.

There is a duty incumbent upon your father, which unless he performs it, he loses the character of a father. Do not desire him to lose anything else by his act; for every man suffers precisely wherein he errs.

Your duty on the other hand, is to meet the case with firmness, modesty, and kindness. Otherwise, you forfeit nobleness, piety and tolerance.

LV

SUPPOSE, a judge pronounces you guilty of impiety. Is the judge's pronouncement of a sentence any business of yours? No. Then why do you any longer trouble yourself about it?

Thus, when any alarming news is brought to you, your responses should be such as these:—

“Such a one threatens you.”

Me? No.

“He censures you.”

Let him look to it, how he does his duty.

“He will give you an unjust sentence.”

Poor wretch!

LVI

ANOTHER man asked:—

“What can you say about banishment? I have just been banished from Rome, and may no longer return there even to see my family.”

If you are in banishment, do not picture to yourself the manner of living in Rome,—how many pleasures you used to find there, and how many persons would await your return; but dwell rather on this point,—how he who must live in banishment, may live there happily.

Then, for all other pleasures substitute the consciousness that you are obeying God, and performing not in word, but in deed, the duty of a wise and good man.

How great a thing it is to be able to say to yourself,—“What others are now solemnly teaching in the schools, *that* I put into practice. Those principles which are there discussed, I have made my own. God hath been pleased to let me recognize this within myself, and Himself to discern whether or not He hath in me one fit for a soldier and a citizen; and He employs me as a witness to other men concerning those things which are uncontrollable by Will.

“For this reason, He now brings me hither, now sends me thither; sets me before mankind, poor, powerless, sick; banishes me to Gyaros; leads me to prison; not that He hates me,—Heaven forbid! for who hates the most faithful of his servants?—nor that He neglects me, for He neglects not one of the smallest things; but to exercise me, and make use of me as a witness to others.

“Appointed to such a service, do I still care where I am, or with whom, or what is said of me? Can I fail to be wholly attentive to God and to His Commands?”

Having these principles always at hand, and practising them by yourself, and making them ready for use, you will never want any one to comfort and strengthen you. For shame does not consist in having nothing to eat, but in not having wisdom enough to exempt you from fear and sorrow.

And, if you once acquire that exemption, will a tyrant or his guards or courtiers be fearful to you? Will offices or office-seekers disturb you, who have received so great a command from God? Only do not make a parade of it, nor grow insolent upon it; but show it by your actions; and though no one else should notice it, be content that you are well and blessed.

LVII

A STUDENT stood up and asked Epictetus,—

“Why does Providence allow so much unhappiness and injustice to exist in the world?”

Whenever you blame Providence for anything, do but reflect, and you will find that it has happened agreeably to Reason.

“Well, but a dishonest man has the advantage.”

In what?

“In money.”

Here he ought to surpass you; because he cheats and he is shameless. Where is the wonder? But, see whether he has the advantage of you in fidelity or in honor. You will find that he has not, but that wherever it is best for you to have the advantage of him, there you have it.

I once said to one who was full of indignation at the good fortune of Philostorgus,—Why would you be willing to sleep with Sura?

"Heaven forbid!" said he, "that, that day should ever come."

Why then, are you angry that he is paid for what he sells? And, how can you call him happy in possessions acquired by means which you detest? What harm does Providence do, in giving the best things to the best men? Is it not better to have a sense of honor than to be rich?

"Granted."

Why then, are you angry, man, if you have what is best? Always remember that, and have it in mind that a better man has the advantage of a worse one in that direction in which he is better; and you will never have any indignation.

LVIII

ANOTHER STUDENT asked Epictetus,—

"Why does Providence allow so many of the great events of the world to be accomplished by men of evil character?"

What events call you great?

"Wars and sedition; the destruction of great numbers of men, and the capture of cities."

And what in all this is great? Nothing. What is great in the death of large numbers of men and large numbers of sheep, or in the burning of the dwellings of men and the nests of storks?

"Are these things similar?"

They are. The bodies of men are destroyed, and the bodies of sheep. The houses of men are burnt and the nests of storks. What is there great or fearful in all this? Pray, show me the difference between the house of a man and the nest of a stork, considered as a habitation, except

that houses are built with beams and tiles and bricks, and nests with sticks and clay?

"What then? Are a stork and a man similar?"

Similar in body.

"Is there no difference then, between a man and a stork?"

Yes, surely; but not in these things.

"In what, then?"

Inquire; and you will find, that the difference lies in something else. See whether it be not in rationality of action, in social instincts, fidelity, honor, providence, judgment.

"Where then, is the real evil or good of man?"

Just where this difference lies, in the Will. If this distinguishing trait is preserved, and remains well fortified, and neither honor, fidelity, and judgment is destroyed, then man himself is likewise saved; but when any one of these is lost, or demolished, he himself is lost also. In this, do all great events consist.

LIX

WHAT is illness? A mask. Turn it and be convinced. This weak flesh is sometimes affected by harsh, and sometimes by pleasant impressions. If suffering be beyond endurance, the door is open. Till then, bear it. It is fit that the final door should be open against all accidents. Thus, we escape all trouble.

"What then, is the fruit of these principles?"

What it ought to be. To the wise, it is the most noble and the most suitable, bringing tranquillity, security, and freedom.

Practise yourself, for Heaven's sake, in these little

things, and thence proceed to greater ones. Some one says,—"I have a pain in my head." Do not lament. Another says,—"I have a pain in my ear." Do not lament. I do not say that you may never groan, but do not groan in spirit.

Sickness is an impediment to the body, but not to the Will, unless the Will, itself, wishes. Lameness is an impediment to the leg, but not to the Will. Say this to yourself with regard to everything that happens.

"But what if I should be ill, when I am away?"

Then, it will be for the best that you should be ill.

"But who will take care of me?"

God and your friends.

"I shall lie on a hard bed."

But like a man.

"I shall not have a convenient room."

Then you will be ill in an inconvenient one.

"Who will provide food for me?"

They, who provide food for others, too.

"But what will be the conclusion of my illness? Any other, than death?"

Why, do you not know then, that the origin of all human evils, and of baseness and cowardice, is not death, but rather the fear of death? Fortify yourself therefore, against that fear. In this, let all your discourses, readings, exercises, tend. And then, you will know that thus alone are men made free.

LX

"MAY I NOT long for health, then?"

By no means. Nor for anything else that depends on another. For, what is not in your power, either to procure or to preserve when you will, *that* belongs to another.

Keep off not only your hands from external things, but even more than that, your *desires*. Otherwise, you have given yourself up as a slave; you have put your neck under the yoke, if you admire any of the things which are not your own, but which are subject to others and are mortal.

“Is not my hand my own?”

It is a part of you, but it is by nature clay, liable to restraint, to compulsion; a slave to everything stronger than itself. And why do I say, your hand? You ought to consider your whole body, but as a useful ass, with a pack-saddle on, desirable only as long as it may be allowed to you.

And since you are thus to regard the body, think what your attitude should be concerning those things to be provided for the use of the body. If the body be an ass, the rest are but bridles, pack-saddles, shoes, oats, hay for that ass. Let these go too. Quit them more easily and readily. And, when you are thus prepared and trained to distinguish what belongs to others from what is your own; what is liable to restraint from what is not; to esteem the one your own property, but not the other; to keep your desire, to keep your aversion, carefully regulated by this point,—whom have you any longer to fear?

“No one.”

For, about what should you be concerned? Only, about what is your own, which consists of the essence of good and evil. And who has any power over *this*? Who can take it away from you? Who can hinder you, any more than God can be hindered? Thus, you obtain true freedom.

LXI

WHAT is death? A mask. Turn it and be convinced. See, it doth not bite. This little body and spirit must be again, as once they were, separated, either now or later. Why then, are you displeased if it be now? For, if not now, it will be later. Why? To fulfil the course of the universe; for it hath need of some things present, others to come, and others already completed.

Nature is admirable, but it is also avaricious of life. Hence, we love and tend the body, which is of all things the most unpleasant and squalid. For, if we were obliged for only five days, to take care of our neighbor's body, we would not endure it.

Just consider what it would mean when we rise in the morning, to clean the teeth of others, and do all requisite offices besides. In reality, it is wonderful that we should love a thing which every day demands so much attention.

I stuff this sack, and then I empty it again. What is more troublesome? But I must obey God. Therefore I remain, and endure to wash and feed and clothe this poor body. When I was younger, it demanded still more of me, and I bore it.

And when Nature, which gave the body, takes it away, will you not bear that? You say,—“I love it.” This is what I have just been observing. This very love has Nature given you, but she also says,—“Now let it go, and be troubled with it no longer.”

Another, Whose care it is, provides you with food, with clothes, with senses, with ideas. Whenever, He doth not provide what is necessary for that body, He sounds a retreat. He opens the door and says,—

"Come."

Whither? To nothing dreadful; but to that whence you were made,—to what is friendly and congenial, to the elements. What in you was fire, goes away to fire; what was earth, to earth; what air, to air; what water, to water. There is no Hades; but all is full of God and Divine Beings.

LXII

"YET, I FEAR to die."

What is that you call dying? Do not talk of the thing in a tragic strain; but, state the thing as it is, that it is time for your material part to revert whence it came. And, where is the terror of this? What part of the world is going to be lost? What is going to happen that is new or prodigious?

The will of Nature may be learned from things upon which we are all agreed. As, when our neighbor's boy has broken a cup, or the like, we are all ready at once to say,—

"This is an accident that will happen."

Be assured, then, that when your own cup is likewise broken, you ought to be affected, just as when another's cup was broken. Now, apply this reasoning to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say,—

"This is an accident of mortality."

But, if any one's *own* child happens to die, it is immediately,—*"Alas! How wretched am I!"*

WE SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW WE ARE AFFECTED BY EVENTS CONCERNING OTHERS AND THEN ACT ACCORDINGLY.

LXIII

“WELL, I MAY console myself to the inevitability of my own death; but I fear to see my relatives die. What if my parents die, while I am away?”

What indeed, but that those are dead, who were born to die? Do you at once wish to grow old, and yet see the death of none of those you love? Do you not know that in the course of time, many and various events must necessarily happen; that a fever must get the better of one, a highwayman of another, a tyrant of a third? For such is the world we live in; such they who live in it with us.

Heats and colds, improper diet, journeys, voyages, winds, and various accidents destroy some, banish others; destine one to an embassy, and another to war. And now, pray, will you sit in consternation about all these things, lamenting, disappointed, wretched, dependent on another; and not in one or two matters only, but in ten thousand times ten thousand?

We often hear people say,—“But, I have parted with such a one, and I am therefore in grief.”

Was Reason then given to us by God for the purpose of unhappiness and misery, to make us live wretched and lamenting? Oh, by all means, let everyone be deathless! Let nobody go from home! Let us never leave home ourselves, but remain rooted to one spot like trees! And, if any of our acquaintances should leave his home, let us sit and cry; and when he comes back, let us dance and clap our hands like children.

Shall we never wean ourselves, and remember what we have heard from the philosophers,—that the universe is

one great city; that our substance is part of that universe; that there must necessarily be a certain rotation of things; that some must give way to others, some be dissolved, and others rise in their stead?

One way or other, you must depart from this frail body, whether by a fever, by hunger, by violence, or by natural causes. What harm is there in death then? If you are not near it now, will you not be near it later? What, will the world be overturned, when you die? Why then, do you flatter your physician? Why do you say,—

“If you please, sir, I shall do well.”

Why do you furnish an occasion for his pride? Why do you not treat your physician, with regard to an insignificant body,—which is not yours, but mortal,—as you do a shoemaker about your shoes, or a carpenter about a house?

When the physician enters, do not dread what he may say; nor, if he should tell you that you are doing well, do not be too much rejoiced; for what good has he told you? When you were in health, what good did it do you? Do not be dejected when he tells you that you are very ill; for what is it to be very ill? To be near the separation of soul and body.

It is the season for these things. If you fulfil your duties, you have what belongs to you. For it is not the business of a philosopher to take care of mere externals,—his wine, his oil, his body,—but of his Reason. And, how with regard to externals? Not to behave inconsiderately about them.

What occasion is there then, for fear; what occasion for anger, for desire, about things that belong to others, and are of no value?

LXIV

DEATH MUST overtake us. At what employment? The husbandman at his plow and the sailor on his voyage. At what employment would you be taken? For indeed, at what employment ought you to be taken? If there is any better occupation at which you ought to be taken, than that which you are now following, then take up that occupation. For my own part, I would be found engaged in nothing but in the regulation of my own Will; how to render it undisturbed, unrestrained, uncompelled, free. I would be found studying this, that I may be able to say to God,—

“Have I transgressed Thy commands? Have I perverted the powers, the senses, the instincts which Thou hast given me? Have I ever accused Thee, or censured Thy dispensations? I have been ill, because it was Thy will, like others; but, I willingly. I have been poor, it being Thy will; but with joy. I have not been in power, because it was not Thy will.

“Have I not always approached Thee with cheerful countenance, prepared to execute Thy commands and the indications of Thy will? Is it Thy pleasure that I should depart from this assembly? I depart. I give Thee all thanks that Thou hast thought me worthy to have a share in it with Thee; to behold Thy works, and to join with Thee in comprehending Thy administration.”

Let death overtake me while I am thinking, while I am writing, such thoughts as these.

LXV

A MAN ROSE and said,—

“I am hungry and have no means of livelihood. Unless I find suitable employment, I shall die of starvation. And, I am too young to die.”

And why, do you speak of dying? You have health and strength. Cannot you write? Cannot you keep a school? Cannot you be a watchman at somebody’s door?

“But, it is shameful to come to this necessity.”

First, therefore, learn what things are shameful. Is that shameful to you, which is not your own act?, of which you are not the cause; which has happened to you by accident, like a fever or a headache?

If your parents were poor, or left others their heirs, or, though living do not assist you, are these things shameful to you? Is this what you have learned from the philosophers? Have you not heard that what is shameful is blameable; and what is blameable must be something, which deserves to be blamed? Whom do you blame for an action not your own? Did you then, make your father such as he is; or, is it in your power to mend him? Is that permitted to you?

But why, have you contrived to make yourself so useless and good for nothing that nobody will receive you into his home? Whereas, if any sound, useful vessel be thrown out of doors, whoever finds it, will take it up and prize it as something gained. Yet, nobody will take *you* up, but everybody esteems you a loss.

What, cannot you so much as perform the office of a dog or a cat? Why then, do you wish to live any longer if you are so worthless? Does any good man fear that food

shall fail him? It does not fail the blind; it does not fail the lame. Shall it fail a good man? A paymaster is always to be found for a soldier, a laborer, or a shoemaker. And, shall he be wanting to a good man?

Thus, live on forever. You, who have applied yourself to philosophy in name only, and have disgraced its principles, by showing that they are unprofitable and useless to those who profess them. You have never made constancy, tranquillity, and serenity the object of your desires. You have sought no teacher for this knowledge, but many for mere syllogisms.

LXVI

A STUDENT said, "But, this is not the contest that I would choose."

Is it in your power then, to make that selection? Such a body is given to you, such parents, such brothers, such a country, and such a rank in it. And then you come to me desiring to change the conditions! Have you not the ability to manage that which is given to you?

You should say to me,—“It is your business to propose; mine, to treat the subject well.” No, but you say,—“do not give me such a problem, but such a one; do not offer me such an obstacle, but such a one.”

There will be a time, I suppose, when tragedians will fancy themselves to be mere masks, and buskins, and costumes. These things are your materials, man,—your stage-properties. Speak something; that we may know whether you are a tragedian or a buffoon; for both have all the rest in common.

Suppose any one should take away the actor's buskins and mask, and bring him upon the stage in his common

dress; is the tragedian lost, or does he remain? If he has a voice, he remains.

God commands me,—“Here, this instant take upon you this part.”

I take it; and taking it, I show how a skilful man performs the part.

Then God says,—

“Now, lay aside your robe; put on rags, and come upon the stage in that character.”

I obey. I put on rags and use a voice suitable to my part.

Next God says,—“Now come and bear witness for Me; for you are a fit witness to be produced by Me. Is anything which is inevitable to be classed as either good or evil? Do I hurt any one? Have I made the good of each individual to rest in any one, but himself? What evidence do you give for God?”

What would you say? Would you complain like this one who says,—“I am in miserable condition, O Lord! I am undone. No mortal cares for me. All blame me. All speak ill of me.”

Is this the evidence that you are to give? And will you bring disgrace upon His summons, Who hath conferred such an honor upon you, and thought you worthy of being produced as a witness in such a case?

LXVII

HERE is the test of the matter. Here is the trial of a philosopher; for death is a part of life, as is a walk, a voyage, or a journey. Do you read when you are walking? No, nor in a fever. But when you walk well, you attend to what belongs to a walker. So, if you bear a fever well, you have everything belonging to one in a fever.

What is it to bear a fever well? Not to blame either God or man, not to complain at what happens,—to await death in a right and becoming manner, and to do what is to be done.

For every event that happens in the world, it is easy to give thanks to Providence, if a person has but these two qualities in himself:—A HABIT OF CLOSELY CONSIDERING WHAT HAPPENS TO EACH INDIVIDUAL, AND A GRATEFUL TEMPER. Without the first, he will not perceive the usefulness of things which happen; and without the other, he will not be thankful for them.

If God had made colors, and had not made the faculty of seeing them, what would have been their use? None. On the other hand, if He had made the faculty of observation, without objects to observe, what would have been the use of that? None. Again, if He had formed both the faculty of seeing and the objects to be seen, but had not made the light of day, neither in that case would there have been any use in the faculty of observation or in the objects to be seen.

Take care then, not to die without contemplation of these things. You take a journey to Olympia to behold the work of Phidias, and each of you thinks it a misfortune to die without a knowledge of such things. And will you have no inclination to see and understand those works for which there is no need to take a journey, but which are ready and at hand even to those who bestow no pains! Will you never perceive what you are, or for what you were born, or for what purpose you are admitted to behold this spectacle?

LXVIII

THE FIRST STEP towards becoming a philosopher is to be sensible in what state the ruling faculty of the mind is. For, on knowing it to be weak, no sensible person will immediately employ it in great endeavors. But for lack of this logic, some who can scarce digest a crumb, will yet buy and swallow whole treatises. And so, they throw them up again, because they cannot digest them. Then, come colics, boils and fevers. This it is, to study philosophy superficially.

Digest your studies and then you will not throw them up. Otherwise, they will be crude and impure, and unfit for nourishment. Show us from what you have digested, some change in your ruling faculty; as wrestlers do in their shoulders, from their exercises and their diet; as workmen do in their skill from what they have learnt.

A carpenter does not come and say,—“Here me discourse on the art of building;” but he erects a building, and thus shows himself a master of his trade.

Let it be your business likewise to do something like this. Be manly in your ways of eating, drinking, and dressing. Marry, have children, perform the duty of a citizen. Bear with an unreasonable brother; bear with an unreasonable father; bear with a son, a neighbor, a companion, as becomes a man. Show us these things, so that we may see that you have truly learned something from the philosophers.

“Nay, but I will explain the doctrines of Chrysippus to you as no other person can. I will elucidate his style in the clearest manner.”

And is it for this then, that young men leave their homes

and their parents, that they may come and hear you explain words? But, how can you impart what you have not? For, have you yourself, done anything else, from the beginning, but spend your time in solving syllogisms and convertible propositions and interrogatory arguments?

No, but you say,—“Come and hear me repeat the commentaries.”

Get you gone, and seek somebody else upon whom to bestow them.

LXIX

WHY DO YOU boast of your education? What education, man, that you have learned syllogisms? Why, do you not, if possible forget all of them, and begin again, convinced that hitherto you have not even touched upon the essential point? And for the future, beginning from this foundation, proceed step by step to the superstructure; that nothing may happen which you do not wish, and that everything may happen which you desire.

But, it is not easy to gain the attention of effeminate, young men,—for you cannot take up a custard by a hook. Whereas, the strong-willed, even if you discourage them, are the more eager for learning. Hence Rufus, for the most part, did discourage young men, and made use of that as a criterion of the steadfast and the weak. For, he used to say,—

“As a stone, even if you throw it up, will by its own propensity be carried downward, so a strong-willed person, the more he is forced from his natural bent, the more strongly will he incline towards it.”

LXX

SOME ONE SAID:—

“But there are in life so many things unpleasant and difficult?”

And are there none at Olympia? Are you not heated? Are you not crowded? Are you not without good convenience for bathing? Are you not wet through when it happens to rain? Do you not have uproar and noise and other disagreeable circumstances? But I suppose, by considering all these disagreeable events with the merit of the spectacle, you support and endure them.

Well, and have you not received faculties by which you may support every event of life? Have you not received greatness of soul? Have you not received a manly spirit? Have you not received patience? What effect does anything that may happen, have upon me, while my soul is above it? What shall disconcert or trouble or appear grievous to me? Shall I neglect to use my powers for that purpose for which I received them? Shall I lament and groan at every casualty?

And yet God has not only granted us these faculties by which we may bear every event without being depressed or broken by it, but, like a good Prince and a true Father, has placed their exercise above restraint, compulsion, or hindrance, and wholly within our own control; nor has He reserved a power, even to Himself, of hindering or restraining our faculties. Therefore, let us use them in accordance with Reason to the best of our abilities.

LXXI

A STUDENT SAYS,—“But, I am so unhappy with my father and my mother.”

What then? Was it granted you to come beforehand, and make your own terms and say,—“Let such and such persons, at this hour, be the authors of my birth?”—It was not granted you; for it was necessary that your parents should exist before you, in order that you might be born later. Of whom should you be born? Of just such people as your parents are.

What then? Since they are such, is there no remedy afforded you? Surely, you would be wretched and miserable if you knew not the use of sight. And, are you not more wretched and miserable in being ignorant that you have within you the needful nobleness and manhood wherewith to meet these accidents?

Events proportioned to your Reason are brought before you; but you turn your mind away, at the very time when you ought to have it, the most open and discerning. Rather, why do you not thank God that He has made you superior to those events which He has not placed within your control, and has rendered you accountable for that only which is within your own control? Why then, do you draw cares upon yourself for which you are not accountable? This is giving one's self vexation without need.

Is any one discontented with his parents? Let him be a bad son, and let him mourn. Discontented with his children? Let him be a bad father.

Shall we throw him into prison? What prison? He is already there; for he is in a situation against his Will.

And, wherever any one is against his Will, that is to him a prison, just as though it were equipped with iron-barred windows and strongly-guarded doors.

LXXII

OUR DUTIES are universally measured by our relations with others. Is a certain man your father? In this relationship, there is implied, your taking care of him, submitting to him in all things; patiently receiving his reproaches and his corrections.

“But he is a bad father.”

Is your natural tie, then, to a *good* father? No, but to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, preserve your own just relation toward him. Consider not what *he* does, but what *you* are to do, to keep your own Will in a state conformable to Nature.

For another cannot hurt you, unless you allow him to hurt you. You will then be hurt only when you consent to be hurt. In this manner therefore, if you accustom yourself to contemplate the qualifications of a neighbor, a citizen, a commander, you can deduce from each your corresponding duties.

In a sculptured vase, which is the better,—the silver, or the workmanship? The workmanship. Thus also in the hand, the substance is flesh; but its actions are the principal thing. These functions are threefold,—relating to its existence, to the manner of its existence, and to its principal actions.

Thus likewise, do not set a value on the mere materials of man, the flesh; but on the principal actions which belong to man.

“What are these?”

Engaging in public business, marrying, the production of children, the worship of God, the care of parents, and in general, the regulation of our desires and aversions, our pursuits and avoidances, in accordance with our Nature.

LXXIII

A SCHOLAR then inquired,—“How is my brother’s unkindness to me to be cured?”

Philosophy does not promise to procure any outward good for man; otherwise, it would include something beyond its proper scope. For, as the material for a carpenter is wood; of a statuary, brass; so of the art of living, the material is each man’s own life.

“What then, is my brother’s life?”

That again is a matter for his own art, but is external to you; like property, health, or reputation. Philosophy undertakes none of these. In every circumstance say,—I will keep my Will in harmony with Nature. To whom belongs that Will? To Him in Whom I exist.

Everything has two handles:—one by which it may be borne, another by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the affair by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but rather by the opposite, that he is your brother, that he was brought up with you; and thus, you will lay hold on it as it is to be borne.

“But, because of my brother, I have lost my inheritance.”

Never say of anything,—“I have lost it;” but,—“I have restored it.” Has your inheritance been taken away? It is restored. Has your child died? She is restored. Has your

wife died? She is restored. Has your estate been stolen? That likewise is restored.

“But it was a bad man who took it.”

What is it to you by whose hands He who gave you the estate has demanded it again? While He permits you to possess it, hold the estate as something not your own; as do travellers the inn at which they stay.

LXXIV

SOME ONE inquired,—“If a man injures me, shall I not injure him in return?”

Would that be an act of common sense?

“How do you define common sense?”

Consider common sense as being similar to a common ear, which recognizes and distinguishes only common sounds. Whereas, a musical ear recognizes not only common sounds, but musical sounds as well.

So too, that common natural understanding, by which mankind, in general, discerns the natural laws of life is called common sense.

Applying this definition to your case, consider first what injury is. Now, remember what you have heard from the philosophers. For, if both good and evil lie in the Will, see whether what you say does not amount to this,—

“Since he has hurt himself by injuring me, shall I not hurt myself by injuring him?”

Why do we not make to ourselves some such representation as this? Are we hurt when any detriment happens to our bodily possessions, and are we not hurt at all when our Will is deprived? He who has erred, or injured another, has indeed no pain in his head; nor loses an eye, nor a leg, nor an estate. But, he has injured something greater,—

his Will, his Reason, the Divine Being within him. He has inflicted upon himself indelible harm which will add to his unhappiness and increase his misfortunes.

Whether or not our Will is habitually humbled and faithful, we deem it unimportant, except only in the discussions at school. In that case, all the improvement we make reaches only to words; and beyond that, there is no progress.

LXXV

A WEALTHY man said to Epictetus:—

“Why do you say nothing to me?”

I have only this to say to you; that whoever is utterly ignorant of what he is and why he was born, and in what kind of a universe and in what society; what things are good and what, evil; what, fair and what, base; who understands neither discourse nor demonstration, nor what is true nor what is false, nor is able to distinguish between them; such a one will neither exert his desire, nor aversions, nor pursuits conformably to Nature; he will neither aim nor assent, nor deny, nor suspend his judgment conformably to Nature; but will wander up and down, entirely deaf and blind, supposing himself to be somebody, while he is nobody.

Is there anything new in all this? Is not this ignorance the cause of all the errors that have happened, from the very origin of mankind? This is all I have to say to you; and even this I say against my inclination.

“Why so?”

Because you have not excited me to it. For what can I see in you to excite me, as a spirited horse excites his rider? Your person? That, you disfigure. Your dress? That

is effeminate. Your behavior? Your look? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

When you would hear a philosopher, do not say to him,— “You tell me nothing;” but show yourself fit and worthy to hear; and you will find how you will move him to speak.

LXXVI

Do YOU KNOW what true or false is? What is consistent with other things; and what, contradictory? Yet, I must excite you to study philosophy. How shall I show you, those contradictions among the generality of mankind, by which they differ concerning good and evil, when you know not what *contradiction* means?

Show me then, what I shall gain by discoursing with you. Excite an inclination in me to teach you as a good pasture excites an inclination to eating in sheep; for if you offer sheep a stone, they will not eat. Thus, philosophers too, have a natural inclination to speaking, when the hearer appears to be somebody, when he gives us encouragement. But, if the hearer sits like a stone or a tuft of grass, how can he excite any desire in a man?

Does a vine say to a husbandman,— “Take care of me?” No, but the vine invites the man to take care of it, by showing him that if he does, it will reward him for his care. Who is there, whom bright and agreeable children do not attract to play and prattle with them? But, who was ever taken with an inclination to divert himself or bray with an ass? For, be the creature ever so little, it is still a little ass.

LXXVII

WHEN ANY ONE appears to us to discourse frankly of his own affairs, we too are somehow tempted to disclose our secrets to him. We consider this to be acting with frankness. First, because it seems unfair that when we have heard the affairs of our neighbor, we should not in turn communicate our affairs to him. And then, because we think that we shall not appear to be a frank person, in concealing what belongs to ourselves.

Indeed, people often say,— “I have told you all of my affairs; and will you tell me none of yours?”

Lastly, it is supposed that we may safely trust him who has already trusted us; because we imagine that he will never disclose our affairs for fear that we shall in turn disclose his.

It is thus that the gullible are caught by the soldiers of Rome. A soldier sits by you in civilian dress, and begins to speak ill of Caesar. Then you, as if you had received a pledge of fidelity, by his first beginning the abuse, say likewise what you think; and so you are led away in chains to execution.

Something like this is the case with us in general. But, if some one has safely intrusted his secrets to me, shall I, in imitation of him, trust mine to any one who happens to come my way? Suppose I do trust my secrets to another. Later, he goes and discloses them to everybody. Then, when I find out about it, if I happen to be like him, I in turn, disclose his secrets to everybody. The result being, that I will disparage him; and he, me.

“Ay; but it is unfair that when you have learned the

secrets of your neighbor, not to communicate anything to him in return."

Why, did I ask you for your confidences, sir? Did you tell me your affairs upon condition that I should tell you mine? If you are a prattler, and take all you meet for your friends, would you have me too, become like you?

But what if the case be this,—that you did right in trusting your affairs to *me*, but it is not right that I trust mine to *you*?

Let us suppose that I have a sound barrel, and you have a leaky one; and you should come and deposit your wine with me, to be put in my sound barrel; and then you should take it ill, that in my turn, I did not place my wine in your leaky barrel.

No. I would not, for you have a leaky barrel. How then, are we any longer on equal terms? You have intrusted your affairs to an honest man,—a man of honor; one who finds his help or his harm in his own actions alone, and in nothing external. Would you have me trust my affairs to you, who have dishonored your own Will? Where is the fairness of this?

But show me that you are faithful, honorable, and steady; show me that you have principles conducive to friendship. Show me that your barrel is not leaky, and you shall see that I will not wait for you to intrust your affairs to me, but I will come and entreat you to hear my confidential secrets. For, who would not make use of a good barrel? Who despises a benevolent friend and adviser? Who will not gladly receive one to share the burden of his difficulties; and by sharing them, make them lighter?

"Well, but I trust you, and do you not trust me?"

In the first place, you do not really trust me; but you are a gossip, and therefore can keep nothing in. For, if the former be the case, you would trust only me. But now, whenever you see a man at leisure, you sit down by him and say,—

"My dear friend, there is not a man in the world who wishes me better, or has more kindness for me, than you. I entreat you to hear my affairs."

And this you do to those with whom you have not the least acquaintance. But, if you do trust me, it is plainly as a man of fidelity and honor, and not because I have told you my affairs. Let me alone, then, till I can reciprocate your opinion.

It must therefore be remembered, in general, that confidential discourses require fidelity and a certain sort of principles. And where, at this time, are they readily to be found? Pray, let any one show me a person of such a disposition as to say,—

"I concern myself only with those things which are my own, incapable of restraint, and by nature free."

This aim, I esteem the essence of good; and that person, one who may be trusted with personal confidences.

LXXVIII

It is solitude to be in the condition of a helpless person. For he, who is alone, is not therefore solitary, any more than one in a crowd is the contrary.

When therefore, we lose a son, or a brother, or a friend on whom we used to depend, we often say, we are solitary, even in the midst of Rome, where such a crowd is continually meeting us; and, where we live among so many, and where we have, perhaps, a numerous train of servants. For, he is understood to be solitary, who is helpless and exposed to such as would injure him.

Hence, in a journey especially, we call ourselves solitary, when we fall among thieves; for it is not the sight of a man that removes our solitude, but of an honest man, a man of honor, and a helpful companion.

But, none the less, we should be prepared to be sufficient unto ourselves, and to bear our own company. For, as God converses with Himself, acquiesces in Himself, and contemplates His own administration, and is employed in thoughts worthy of Himself; so too, should we be able to talk with ourselves, and not need the conversation of others.

What solitude is there left then? Why do we make ourselves worse than children? What do they do when they are left alone? They take up shells and sand; they build houses, they pull them down; then, they build something else; and thus, they never want for amusement.

Suppose you were to sail away. Am I to sit and cry because I am left alone and solitary? Am I so unprovided with shells and sand? But children do this from play; and shall we be wretched through wisdom?

As bad performers cannot sing alone, but must sing in the chorus; so, some persons cannot walk alone. If you are anything, walk alone; talk by yourself; and do not skulk in the chorus. Think a little; look about you; examine yourself, that you may know what you are.

We should be able to attend to the Divine administration, to consider our relation to other beings; how we have been formerly affected by events, how we are affected now; what are the things that still press upon us; how these too may be cured, how removed; and if anything wants completing, to complete it according to reason.

LXXIX

LET NOT another's disobedience to Nature become an ill to you; for you were not born to be depressed and unhappy with others; but to be happy with them. And, if

any is unhappy, remember that he is so for himself; for God made all men to enjoy happiness and peace.

He hath furnished all men with means for this purpose; having given them some things for their own, others not their own. And the essence of good and evil, He has placed in things which are our own, as it became Him Who provides for, and protects us, with paternal care.

Men are not disturbed by things, but by the views which they take of things. Thus, death is nothing terrible. But the terror consists in our notion of death, that it is terrible. When therefore, we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never impute it to others, but to ourselves, that is, to our own views.

It is the action of an uninstructed person to reproach others for his own misfortunes; of one entering upon instruction to reproach himself; and of one perfectly instructed, to reproach neither others nor himself.

LXXX

A WISE and good person neither quarrels with any one himself, nor insofar as possible, suffers another to quarrel with him. In order to attain this end, it is necessary to keep the fundamental rules of philosophy in mind. And what are they? First, to learn what things are our own and what belongs to others. Second, that we are not masters of the ruling faculty of others, and cannot therefore, control their actions. Third, that while others act in their own way, we should act conformably to Nature.

“What does this mean?”

Let me illustrate by examples. Such a one has reviled you. You are much obliged to him that he has not struck you. But, he has struck you, too. You are much obliged to him that he has not wounded you. But, he has wounded

you, too. You are much obliged to him that he has not killed you.

For, when did your antagonist ever learn, or from whom, that he is a gentle and social animal; that the very injury inflicted upon another, is a greater injury to him that inflicts it? As he has not learned these things, nor believes them, why should he not follow what appears to him to be to his interest?

Your neighbor has thrown stones. What then? Is it any fault of yours? But your goods are broken. What then? Are you a piece of furniture? No, but your essence consists in the faculty of Will.

“What behavior then, is allowed me in return?”

If you are considering yourself as a savage or a wolf, throw stones, when your neighbor does; and bite, when your neighbor bites. But, if you ask the question regarding your behavior as a man, then examine your treasure. See what faculties you have brought into the world with you. Are they fitted for ferocity, for revenge?

When is a horse miserable? When he is deprived of his natural faculties; not when he cannot crow, but when he cannot run. And a dog? Not when he cannot fly, but when he cannot hunt. Is not a man then, also unhappy in the same manner? Not, when he cannot strangle lions or perform great athletic feats, but when he has lost his rectitude of mind.

How then, did Socrates use to act? First, he never allowed himself to be provoked in a dispute, nor to throw out any reviling or injurious expression; but to bear patiently with those who reviled him. And then, he obliged his antagonist to bear testimony against himself, by making his arguments so clear, that every one avoided the contradiction.

Relying on this faculty, Socrates used to say,— “It is not my custom to cite any other witness for my assertions; but I am always contented with those of my opponent. I call

and summon him for my witness; and his single evidence serves for all others."

For, Socrates knew that, if a rational soul be moved by anything reasonable, the scale must turn whether it will or no, when the truth be demonstrated to that soul. Show the governing faculty of Reason a contradiction, and it will renounce it. But, till you have shown it, rather blame yourself than him who remains unconvinced.

And remember, that it is not he who gives abuse or blows who offends us; but the view that we take of these things, as insulting or hurtful. When, therefore, any one provokes you, be assured that it is your own opinion which provokes you. Try therefore, in the first place, not to be bewildered by appearances. For, if you once gain time for thought, you will more easily command yourself.

LXXXI

LET US examine the personal qualifications of a man, as we do a piece of money, accepting him or rejecting him accordingly.

For instance, what impression has this piece of money?

"Trajan's."

Give it to me. It is good. What impression has this piece of money?

"Nero's."

Throw it away. It is false. It is good for nothing. And so, in the case of men. What stamp has this man's principles?

"Gentleness, social affection, patience, and good nature."

Bring him hither. I receive him. I make such a man, a fellow-traveller, a fellow-citizen.

But, what is the character of this other man? Is he ill-tempered? Is he resentful? Is he quarrelsome? Would

he, if he took the notion break the heads of those who fall in his way? Why then, do you call him a man? For is everything determined by mere outward form? Then say, just as well, that a piece of wax is an apple, if it has the appearance and the smell of an apple.

The external figure is not enough. Nor, consequently, is it sufficient to constitute a man because he has a nose and eyes, if he has not the proper principles of a man. Such a one does not understand reason. He is like an ass, a person who is dead to the sense of shame. He is a worthless creature. Still another, like him, seeks whom he may kick or bite. He is a wild beast.

“But, people scorn one who does not retaliate the affronts of another. Would you have me despised then?”

By whom,— by those who know you? And how can they despise you, who know you to be a gentle and modest man? But, perhaps those who do not know you, will despise you. And, what is that to you? For, no true artist troubles himself about those who are ignorant of his art.

“But people will be much readier to attack me, if I do not attack those who attack me.”

Why do you say *me*? Can any one hurt your Will, or restrain you from treating the phenomena of existence conformably to Nature? Why then, are you disturbed and desirous of making yourself formidable? Why do you not make public proclamation that you are at peace with all mankind, however they may act?

LXXXII

JUST AS Epictetus was saying that man is made for fidelity, and that whoever subverts this, subverts the peculiar property of man; there entered one of the so-called literary men, who had been found guilty of adultery in that city.

But, continued Epictetus, if laying aside that fidelity for which we were born, we form designs against the wife of our neighbor, what do we do? What else but destroy and ruin, — what? Fidelity, honor, and the sanctity of manners. Only these? And do we not ruin friendship, neighborhood, our country? In what rank do we then place ourselves?

How am I to consider you, sir — as a neighbor and a friend? What sort of one? As a citizen? How shall I trust you? Indeed, if you were a chunk of rotting meat so decayed that no use could be made of you, you might be thrown on a dunghill, and no mortal would take the trouble to pick you up. But if, being a man, you cannot fill any one place in human society, what shall we do with you?

If you cannot hold the place of a friend, can you hold even that of a slave? And who will trust you? Why then, should not you also be contented to be thrown upon some dunghill, as worthless?

Will you say after this, — “Has no one any regard for me, — a man of letters?”

You, are wicked, and fit for no use. Just as if wasps should take it ill that no one has any regard for them, but all shun them, and whoever can, beats them down. You have such a sting, that whoever you strike with it, is thrown into troubles and sorrows. What would you have us do with you? There is nowhere to place you.

“What then? Are not women made by nature accessible to all men?”

I admit it; and so is food at table accessible to all those who are invited to eat. But, after the food is distributed, will you go and snatch away the share of him who sits next to you; or slyly steal it, and if you cannot tear away any of the meat, dip your fingers in your neighbor’s dish and lick them? A fine companion! A Socratic guest, indeed!

Again, is not the theatre common to all citizens? Therefore come, when all are seated, if you dare, and turn any

one out of his place. In this sense only are women accessible to all by nature; but when the laws, like a good host, have distributed them, cannot you, like the rest of the company be contented with your own share? Or must you pilfer, and taste what belongs to another?

"But, I am a man of letters and understand Archedemus."

With all your understanding of Archedemus, then, you are an adulterer and a rogue; and instead of a man, a wolf or an ape. For where is the difference?

LXXXIII

SEE THE ORIGIN of tragedy, when trifling accidents befall foolish men. "Ah, when shall I see Athens and the citadel again?" Foolish man, are you not contented with what you see every day? Can you see anything better than the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and the sea?

And, if you comprehend Him Who administers the whole, and carry Him about within yourself, do you still long after certain stones and a fine rock? What will you do then, when you are to leave even the sun and the moon? Will you sit by crying like an infant?

What, then, have you been doing in the school? What did you hear? What did you learn? Why have you written yourself down a philosopher, instead of writing down the real fact:—

"I have prepared some abstracts on philosophy, but I have not so much as approached the door of philosophy. For what pretensions have I in common with Socrates or Diogenes, who lived and died like philosophers?"

Did you ever observe either of them crying, or out of

humor, that he is not such a man, nor such a woman; nor able to live any longer at Athens or at Corinth?

Why do you stay and complain, when, if you will, you can quit the entertainment and play no longer?

Why do you not stay, as children do, as long as you are amused? Such a one, no doubt, will bear banishment and a sentence of death wonderfully well! Why will you not be weaned, as children are, in infancy; and take more solid food when you reach maturity?

LXXXIV

HE IS FREE who lives as he likes; who is not subject to compulsion, to restraint, or to violence; whose pursuits are unhindered, his desires successful, his aversion unincurred. Who then, would wish to lead a wrong course of life?

"No one."

Who would live deceived, erring, unjust, dissolute, discontented, dejected?

"No one."

No wicked man then, lives as he likes. Therefore, no such man is free. And who would live in sorrow, fear, envy, pity, with unfulfilled desires and disappointed aversions?

"No one."

Do we then find any of the wicked exempt from these evils?

"Not one."

Consequently, then, they are not free. If some person who has been twice consul should hear you say this, he will forgive you, provided you add, — "But you are wise, and this has no reference to you." But, if you tell him the truth, that in point of slavery, he does not necessarily

differ from those who have been thrice sold, what but chastisement can you expect?

"For, how," says he, "am I a slave? My father was free, my mother was free. Besides, I am a senator too, and a friend of Caesar; and have been twice consul; and have, myself, many slaves."

In the first place, most worthy sir, perhaps your father too was a slave of the same kind that you are; and your mother, and your grandfather, and all your series of ancestors. But, even were they ever so free, what is that to you? For what, if they were of a generous nature, while you are mean-spirited; they brave, and you a coward; they sober, and you dissolute?

"But what," he says, "has this to do with my being a slave?"

Is it no part of slavery to act against your Will, under compulsion, and lamenting?

"Be it so. But who can compel me, but the master of all, Caesar?"

By your own confession, then, you have *one* master; and let not his being, as you say, master of all, give you any comfort; for then you are merely a slave in a large family.

LXXXV

WHAT IS IT then, that makes a man free and independent? For neither riches, nor consulship, nor the command of provinces nor of kingdoms, can make him so. Something else must be found.

For instance, what is it that keeps any one from being hindered and restrained in penmanship?

"The knowledge of penmanship."

In music?

"The knowledge of music."

Therefore in life too, it must be the knowledge of living. As you have heard it, in general then, consider it likewise in its particulars. Is it possible for him to be unrestrained who desires any of those things that are within the powers of others?

"What do you mean?"

When you would have your body perfect, is it in your power, or is it not?

"It is not."

When you would be handsome?

"It is not."

When you would live or die?

"It is not."

Body then is not our own; but is subject to everything that proves stronger than itself.

"Agreed."

Well, is it in your power to have an estate when you please?

"No."

Slaves?

"No."

Horses?

"Indeed, none of these."

Will you then say that there is *nothing* independent, which is in your power alone? See, if you have anything of that sort.

"I do not know."

But consider it thus: can any one make you assent to a falsehood?

"No one."

In the matter of assent then, you are unrestrained?

"Yes."

Well, can any one compel you to exert your aims toward what you do not like?

"He can. For, when he threatens me with death, or fetters me, he thus compels me."

If then you were to despise dying or being fettered, would you any longer fear him?

"No."

Is despising death then, an action in your power, or is it not?

"It is."

It is therefore, in your power also to exert your aims toward anything, is it not?

"Agreed that it is. But, in whose power are my desires?"

These too, are in your power.

"What then, if, when I desire to walk, any one should restrain me?"

What part of you can he restrain? Can he restrain your *desire* to walk?

"He cannot restrain my *desire* to walk, but he can restrain my *body*."

Ay, as a stone.

"Be it so. But, still I cease to walk."

And who claimed that walking is one of the actions that cannot be restrained? For, I only said that your *desire*,—that is your exerting yourself towards walking,—could not be restrained. For, wherever the body is concerned, you have already heard that nothing is in your power.

If I prize my body first, I have surrendered myself as a slave; if my estate, the same; because I at once betray where I am vulnerable. Just as when a reptile pulls in his head, I bid you strike that part of him which he guards. So, be assured, that wherever you show a desire to guard yourself, there will your master attack you. Remember but this, and whom will you any longer fear?

LXXXVI

MAN IS not the master of man; but pleasure is, and pain, and life, and death. For without these, bring even Caesar to me, and you will see how intrepid I will be. But, if he comes thundering and threatening me with pain and death; and these are the objects of my terror, what else can I do, but act like a truant slave and acknowledge my master?

Consider what is our idea of freedom in animals. Some people keep tame lions, and feed them and even lead them about. Who will say that any such lion is free? Nay, does he not live the more slavishly, the more he lives at ease? And who that had sense and reason would wish to be one of those lions? Again, how much will caged birds suffer in trying to escape? Nay, some of them starve themselves to death rather than undergo such a life. Others are saved only with difficulty and in a pining condition; and the moment they find an opening, out they go.

Hence, we will admit those only to be free who will not endure captivity, but so soon as they are taken, die and so escape. Thus, Diogenes, somewhere says, that the only way to freedom is to die with ease. And he writes to the Persian king:—

“You can no more enslave the Athenians than you can enslave fish.”

The king replied,— “Why? Can I not get possession of them?”

“If you do,” said Diogenes, “they will leave you, and be gone like fish. For catch a fish, and it dies. And, if the Athenians too, die as soon as you have caught them, of what use are your warlike preparations?”

This is the voice of a free man who had examined the matter in earnest, and as it might be expected, understood it thoroughly. But, if you seek freedom where it is not, what wonder if you never find it?

Come then, let us recapitulate what has been granted. The man who is unrestrained, who has all things in his power as he wills, is free; but he who may be restrained or compelled or hindered, or thrown into any condition against his Will, is a slave.

LXXXVII

IF THEN, you see any one taking pains for things that belong to another, and subjecting his Will to them, be assured that this man has a thousand things to compel and restrain him. He has no need of burning pitch and the torturer's wheel, to make him tell what he knows. But the nod of a girl for instance, will shake his purpose, the good will of a courtier, the desire of an office, of an inheritance, ten thousand things of that sort.

Consider what you have instead of externals. Suppose I have decency, and another the office of tribune; I have modesty, and he the praetorship. I will pay no undeserved honor; for I am free, and the son of God. I must not value anything else, neither body, nor possessions, nor fame, — in short, nothing. For, it is not His will that I should value them. If this had been His pleasure, He would have placed them in my power, which now He has not done; therefore, I cannot transgress His commands.

Seek in all things your own highest good. For other aims, recognize them so far as the case requires, and in accordance with reason, contented with this alone. Otherwise, you will be unfortunate, disappointed, restrained,

and hindered. These are the established laws; these are the statutes.

Who is your master? *Whosoever controls those things which you seek or shun.*

LXXXVIII

WHEN AN important personage once came to visit him, Epictetus, having inquired into the particulars of his affairs, asked him whether he had a wife and children. The other replying that he had, Epictetus then inquired,—

In what manner do you live with them?

“Very miserably,” said he.

How so? For men do not marry, and have children, in order to be miserable, but rather to make themselves happy.

“But I am so anxious about my children that the other day, when my daughter was sick and appeared to be in danger, I could not bear even to be with her, but ran away, till I was told that she had recovered.”

And pray, do you think this was acting right?

“It was acting naturally.”

Well, do but convince me that it was acting naturally, and I can as well convince you that everything natural is right.

“But all, or most of us fathers, are affected in the same way.”

I do not deny the fact; but the question between us is, whether it is right. For, by your reasoning, it must be said that diseases happen for the good of the body, because they do happen; and even, that vices are natural, because all, or most of us, are guilty of them. Do you show me then, how such a behavior as yours appears to be natural.

"I cannot undertake that; but do you rather show me that it is neither natural nor right."

If we are disputing about black and white, what criterion must we call in to distinguish them?

"The sight."

If about hot and cold, or hard and soft, what?

"The touch."

Well then, when we are debating about natural and unnatural, and right and wrong, what criterion are we to take?

"I cannot tell."

And yet to be ignorant of a criterion of colors, or of smells, or tastes, might perhaps be no very great loss; but do you think that he suffers only a small loss who is ignorant of what is good and evil, and natural and unnatural to man?

"No,— the very greatest."

Well, tell me are all things which are judged good and proper by some, rightly to be judged so? Thus, is it possible that the several opinions of Jews and Syrians and Egyptians and Romans concerning food should all be right?

"How can it be possible?"

I suppose, then, it is necessary that, if the opinions of the Egyptians be right, the others must be wrong; if those of the Jews be good, the rest must be bad.

"How can it be otherwise?"

And where there is ignorance, there likewise is want of wisdom and instruction in the most necessary points.

"It is granted."

Then, as you are sensible of this, you will for the future apply yourself to nothing, and think of nothing else, but how to learn the criterion of what is agreeable to nature; and to use that, in judging of each particular case. At present, the assistance I have to give you towards what

you desire is this: Does affection seem to you to be a right and natural thing?

"Yes."

Well, and is affection natural and right, and reason not so?

"By no means."

Is there any opposition then, between reason and affection?

"I think not."

Suppose there were. If one of two opposites be natural, the other must necessarily be unnatural, must it not?

"It must."

What we find then, in agreement with love and reason, *that* we may safely pronounce to be right and good.

"Agreed."

Well then, you will not dispute this, that to run away, and leave a sick child, is contrary to reason. It remains for us to consider whether it be consistent with affection.

"Let us consider it."

Did you then, from affection for your child, do right in running away and leaving her? Has her mother no affection for the child?

"Yes, surely she has."

Would it have been right then, that her mother too should leave her, or would it not?

"It would not."

And does not her nurse love her?

"She does."

Then, ought she likewise to leave her?

"By no means."

And does not her teacher love her?

"He does."

Then, ought he also to have run away and left her? Would it be right that the child, being thus left alone and unassisted, from the great affection of her parents and

friends, should be left to die among people who neither loved her nor took care of her?

"Heaven forbid!"

But is it not unreasonable and unjust, that what you think right in yourself, on account of your affection, should not be allowed to others, who have the very same affection as you?

"It is absurd."

Pray, if you were ill yourself, should you be willing to have your family, so very affectionate as to leave you helpless and alone?

"By no means."

Now, was there no other motive that induced you to desert your child?

"How is that possible?"

I mean some such motive as induced a person at Rome to hide his face, while a horse was running to which he earnestly wished success; and when, beyond his expectation, it won the race he was obliged himself, to be sponged to recover from his faintness.

"And what was this motive?"

At present perhaps, it cannot be made clear to you. It is sufficient to be convinced, that we are not to seek any motive merely from without; but that there is the same motive in all cases, which moves us to do or forbear any action; to speak or not to speak; to be elated or depressed; to avoid or pursue,— that very impulse which hath now moved us two; you, to come and sit and hear me; and me, to speak as I do.

"And what is that?"

Is it anything else than that it seemed right to us to do so?

"Nothing else."

This too, was the cause of your running away from your child, that it then seemed right. And if, hereafter, you should stay with her, it will be, because that seems right.

You are now returning to Rome because it seems right to you; but if you should alter your opinion, you will not return. In a word, neither death, nor exile, nor pain, nor anything of this kind, is the real cause of our doing or not doing any action, but our inward opinions and principles.

LXXXIX

“WHAT THEN, is the proper training for affection?”

First, then the highest and principal means is this,—that when you attach yourself to any one, it must not be as to a material possession.

“How then?”

Your attachment to a loved one must be as to something as brittle as glass or earthenware; so that if it happens to be broken, you may not lose your self-control. So too, when you embrace your child, or brother, or your friend, never yield yourself wholly to excessive affection, nor let passion pass into excess; but curb it, restrain it,—like those do who stand behind triumphant victors, reminding them that they are men.

Do you likewise remind yourself that you love what is mortal; that you love what is not your own. It is allowed you for the present, not irrevocably, nor forever; but as a fig or a bunch of grapes, in the appointed season. If you long for these in winter, you are foolish. So, if you long for your friend, or your son, when you cannot have them, remember that you are wishing for figs in winter.

“How then, am I to preserve a properly affectionate disposition?”

As becomes a noble-spirited and a happy person. For Reason will never tell you to be dejected and broken-hearted, or to depend upon another, or to reproach God or

man. Be affectionate in such a manner as to observe all this.

But if, from affection, as you call it, you are to be a slave and miserable; it is not worth your while to be affectionate. But, what restrains you from loving any one as a mortal,— as a person who may be obliged to quit you?

Pray, did not Socrates love his own children? But it was as became one who was free, and mindful, that his first duty was to gain the love of God. Hence, he violated no part of the character of a good man.

But, we make use of every pretense to be dispirited; some on account of a child; some, of a mother; and some on account of a brother. But it is not fit to be unhappy on account of any one, but happy on account of all; and chiefly of God, Who has constituted us for happiness.

XC

WHAT HARM is there, while you kiss your child, in saying to yourself, softly,— “To-morrow, you may die;”— and so to your friend,— “To-morrow, either you or I may go away and see each other no more”?

“But these sayings are ominous.”

And so are some incantations; but because they are useful, I do not mind them. Only let them be useful.

But, do you call anything ominous, except what implies some ill? Cowardice is evil; baseness is evil; and so are lamentation, grief and shamelessness. These are words of bad omen; and yet we ought not to shrink from using them, as a guard against the things they mean. But do you tell me that a word is ominous which is significant of anything natural?

Say too, that it is ominous for ears of corn to be reaped;

for this signifies the destruction of the corn. Say too, that the fall of the leaf is ominous; and also the making of confectionery from figs, and raisins from grapes. What do these acts of Nature portend? Destruction? No, but changes from a certain state into another, according to a certain appointed order and administration. Such is absence, a slight change; such is death, a greater change.

"What then? Shall I be no more?"

True; but you will be something else, of which at present the world has no need; for even *you* were not produced when you pleased, but when the world had need of you. Hence, a wise and good man, mindful who he is and whence he came, and by Whom he was produced, is attentive only how he may fill his post regularly and dutifully before God.

Thus, imagine yourself conversing with God, saying,—

"Dost Thou wish me still to live? Let me live free and noble, as Thou desirest; for Thou hast made me incapable of restraint in what is my own. Hast Thou no further use of me? Farewell! I have stayed thus long through Thee alone, and no other; and now I depart in obedience to Thee."

"How do you depart?"

"Still as Thou wilt; as one free, as Thy servant, as one sensible of Thy commands and Thy prohibitions. But, while I am employed in Thy service, what wouldst Thou have me be,—a prince, or a private man; a senator, or a plebeian; a soldier, or a general; a preceptor, or a master of a family? Whatever post or rank, Thou shall assign me, like Socrates, I will die a thousand deaths rather than desert it."

Let these things be ready at hand, night and day. These things write; these things read; of these things talk both to yourself and to others. For, it is much to be always able to say,—

"I knew that I begot one born to die."

Thus, do you say too,— “I knew that I was liable to die, to travel, to be exiled, to be imprisoned.”

When things turn against you, seek from what quarter the event proceeds. You will presently recollect,— “It is from things uncontrollable by Will, not from what is my own. What then, is it to me?”

Then say to yourself, remembering that this is the chief point,— “Who sent this,— the public law, the city, the general, God? Then, give it to me, for I must obey the law in all things.”

XCI

A STUDENT says,— “What vexes me is that people pity me.”

Is this your affair then, or theirs who pity you? and further, how is it in your power to prevent it?

“It is in my power, if I can show them that I do not need their pity.”

But are you now, in such condition as not to need pity?

“I think I am. But these people do not pity me for what, if anything, would deserve pity,— my faults;— but for my poverty, and want of power, and sicknesses, and misfortunes, and other things of that kind.”

Are you then, prepared to convince the world that none of these things is in reality an evil? And, that it is possible for a person to be happy, even when he is poor, and without honors or power? Or, will you pretend that you are rich and powerful?

The first method is impracticable as well as impossible, to undertake the very thing that God, Himself, could not do,— to convince all mankind what things are really good and what things are really evil. Is this power granted to you?

“No.”

The only thing granted to you is to convince yourself regarding right and wrong, and good and evil. And you have not yet done that. Still, you try to convince others regarding these matters.

Who has lived so long with you, as you have with yourself? Who is so likely to have faith in you, as you, yourself? Who is more truly a well-wisher or a friend to you, than you, yourself? How it is then, that you have not yet convinced yourself?

You have heard the reasonings of philosophers, and agreed to them. Yet, in fact, you are not the better educated. Are you so stupid? And yet, in other things which you had a desire to learn, you were not found stupid; but you quickly learned grammar and geometry and the solution of syllogisms.

But, have you forgotten the real things that you learned at school? What was it that you studied about, man? To learn to be exempt from grief, perturbation and meanness, and to be free.

Have you forgotten then, that the only way that leads to this is to give up what is beyond the control of the Will; to withdraw from it, and confess that it belongs to others?

Letting others alone, then, why will you not be your own scholar and teacher? Let others look to it, whether it be to their advantage to think and act contrary to Nature.

Remember the philosophers' saying, that:—

“NO ONE IS NEARER TO ME, THAN ME, MYSELF.”

XCII

WHAT THEN, do you need? Is not this the difficulty, that the contrary principles are not yet removed out of your mind? Is it not that you have not strengthened these opinions by exercise, nor practised them in action; and like weapons thrown aside, they have become rusty with disuse?

Yet neither in writing, nor reading, nor solving syllogisms, are you contented with mere learning; but you apply in every way the forms of arguments which are presented to you. But the necessary principles by which you might become exempted from grief, fear, and passion, and be unrestrained and free, you do not exercise, nor bestow upon them the proper care.

And then you trouble yourself about what others will say of you; whether you shall appear to them worthy of regard; whether you shall appear to them happy. Will you not see, foolish man, what you can say about *yourself*; what sort of person you appear to *yourself* in your opinions, in your desires, in your aversions, in your pursuits, in your preparation in the proper arts of a man? But instead of that, you trouble yourself whether others pity you!

“Very true. But I am pitied without reason.”

How then, are you pitied without reason? For you render yourself worthy of pity by what you suffer upon being pitied.

Supposing my head is well, and all around me think it aches. What is that to me? I am free from a fever; and they pity me, as if I had one. “Poor soul,” they say, “what a long while you have had this fever!” I say, too, with a

dismal countenance,— Ay, indeed, it is a long time that I have been ill.— They ask,— “What can the consequence be, then?” I reply, what pleases God. And, at the same time I secretly laugh at those who pity me for these imaginary ills.

What forbids you, then, to do the same in your case? You are poor, but you have the right principles concerning poverty. You are not in power and others are; but you have such opinions as you ought to have concerning power and the want of power.

Let them worry who pity you. You are neither hungry, nor thirsty, nor cold. But because they are hungry and thirsty, and cold, they suppose you to be so, too. Ask yourself, what can you do for *them*?

Are you to go about making proclamations and saying,—

“My good people, do not deceive yourselves. I am very well. I care neither for riches, nor power, nor anything else, but right principles. These I possess unrestrained, and care for nothing further.”

What nonsense is this? How have you right principles when you are not contented to be what you are; but you are in agony as to how you shall appear to others?

XCIII

IF YOU THINK that you know how to apply your general principles to particular cases, tell me upon what you base your judgment?

“Upon its seeming so to me.”

But, does it not seem so to another; and does not, he too, think that he makes a right application?

“He does.”

Is it possible then, that each of you should rightly apply your principles, on the very subject about which your opinions conflict?

"It is not."

Have you anything to show us, then, for this application of your judgment, beyond the fact of its seeming so to you.

"No."

Does a madman act otherwise, than seems right to him?

"No."

Is this, then a sufficient criterion for him, too?

"It is not."

Come, therefore, to some stronger ground, than mere seeming.

"What is that?"

The being sensible of the disagreement of men with each other; an inquiry into the cause of this disagreement; and a disapprobation and distrust of what merely seems; a careful examination into what seems, whether it seems rightly; and the discovery of some rule which shall serve like a balance for the determination of weights; or like a square for distinguishing straight from crooked.

XCIV

THE FIRST difference between one of the crowd and a philosopher is this: the one says,— "I am undone on account of my child, my wife, my father;" but the other, if he ever be obliged to say,— "I am undone!" reflects, and adds,— "on account of myself."

For the Will cannot be restrained or hurt by anything to which the Will does not extend, but only by itself. If therefore, we would always think this way, and whenever we

are unsuccessful, would lay the fault on ourselves, and remember that there is no cause of perturbation and worry except in following wrong principles, I assure you that we should make real progress.

But, we set out in a very different way from the very beginning. In infancy, for example, if we happen to stumble, our nurse does not chide us, but beats the stone. Why, what harm has the stone done? Was it to move out of its place for the folly of your child? Again, if we do not find something to eat when we come out of the bath, our tutor does not try to satisfy our appetite, but berates the cook. Why, did we appoint you, tutor of the cook, man? No, but of our child. It is he whom you are to correct and improve.

Because of these absurdities, even when we are grown up, we appear like children. For, an unmusical person is a child in music; an illiterate person, a child in learning; and an untaught one, a child in life.

XCV

IN EVERY AFFAIR consider what precedes and what follows, and then undertake it. Otherwise, you will begin with spirit, careless of the consequences, and then when obstacles develop you will shamefully desist.

One says,— “I would conquer at the Olympic games.”

But consider what precedes and what follows, and then, if it be to your advantage, engage in the affair. You must conform to rules,— submit to a diet, refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether you wish to or not, at a stated hour, in heat and in cold; and you must drink no cold water, and sometimes, no wine;— in a word, you must give yourself up to your trainer as to a physician. Then, in

the combat, you may be thrown in a ditch, dislocate your arm, turn your ankle, swallow an abundance of dust, receive blows for negligence, and finally, lose the victory.

When you have reckoned all this, if your determination still holds, set about the combat. Otherwise, take notice, you will behave like children who sometimes play wrestlers, sometimes play gladiators, sometimes blow a trumpet, and sometimes act a tragedy, when they happen to have seen and admired one of these shows.

Thus, you too, will be at one time a wrestler, at another a gladiator; now a philosopher, next an orator; but nothing in earnest. Like an ape, you mimic all you see; and one thing after another is sure to please you, but is out of favor as soon as it becomes familiar. For, you have never entered upon anything with determination, nor after having surveyed and tested the whole matter; but carelessly, and with a half-way zeal.

Thus, some when they have seen a philosopher, have a mind to be philosophers too. Consider first, man, what the matter is, and what your own nature is able to bear. If you would be a wrestler, you must first consider your shoulders, your back, your thighs; for different persons are made for different things.

Do you think that you can act as you do now and be a philosopher; that you can eat, drink, be angry, be discontented, as you are now? You must watch, you must labor, you must get the better of certain appetites; you must quit your acquaintances, be despised by your servant, be laughed at by those you meet; you must come off worse than others in everything,— in offices, in honors, and before tribunals.

When you have fully considered all these things, approach, if you please. If by parting with externals, you have a mind to purchase serenity, freedom, and tranquillity, you are welcome. If not, do not come hither. Do

not, like children, be now a philosopher, then a publican, then an orator, and then one of Caesar's officers. These things are not consistent.

XCVI

If you would improve, be content to be thought foolish and dull with regard to externals. Do not desire to be thought to know anything about them. If you should appear to others to be somebody, distrust yourself. Be assured, it is not easy at once to keep your Will in harmony with Nature, and to secure externals; because while you are absorbed in the one, you must of necessity, neglect the other.

When you have lost anything external, have always at hand the consideration of what you have got instead of it. And, if this be of more value, do not by any means call yourself a loser,— whether it be a horse for an ass; an ox for a sheep; a good action for a piece of money; a due composure of mind for a dull jest; or modesty for indecent talk. By continually remembering this, you will preserve your character as it ought to be.

Otherwise, know that you are spending your time in vain. And all that to which you are now applying your mind, you are about to spill and overturn. And there needs but little, merely a small deviation from reason, to destroy and overthrow all your philosophic studies.

A pilot does not need so much apparatus to overturn a ship as to save it; but if he exposes it a little too much to the wind, it is lost. Even, if he should not do it by design, but only for a moment be thinking of something else, the ship is lost.

Such is the case here too. If you do but nod a little, all

that you have hitherto accomplished, is gone. Take heed then, to the appearance of things. Keep yourself watchful over them. It is no inconsiderable matter that you have to guard; but modesty, fidelity, constancy, docility, innocence, fearlessness, serenity,— in short, freedom.

“But I have made many efforts to overcome my weaknesses, and still they conquer me.”

No great thing is created suddenly, any more than a fig or a bunch of grapes. If you tell me that you desire a fig, I answer you that it takes time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen. Since then, the fruit of a fig-tree is not brought to perfection suddenly, or in one hour, do you think to possess instantaneously and easily the fruit of the human mind? I warn you, expect it not.

You must be one man, either good or bad. You must cultivate your own Reason or else externals. Apply yourself either to things within or without you; that is, be either a philosopher, or one of the mob. And since the stakes are so great, will you not apply yourself wholeheartedly and consistently to the task of making yourself worthy in the sight of God?

XCVII

EVERY HABIT and faculty is preserved and increased by corresponding actions; as the habit of walking, by walking; and of running, by running. If you would be a reader, read; if a writer, write. But if you do not read for a whole month, but do something else, you will see what will be the consequence. Thus, after sitting still for ten days, get up and attempt to take a long walk, and you will find how your legs are weakened. Upon the whole then, whatever you would make habitual, practise it; and if you would

not make a thing habitual, do not practise it, but accustom yourself to something else.

It is the same with regard to the operations of the soul. Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but that you have increased a habit, and added fuel to a fire.

When you are overcome by the seductions of a woman, do not consider it a single defeat alone, but that you have fed your dissoluteness. For, he who has had a fever, even after it has left him, is not in the same state of health as before unless he was perfectly cured; and the same thing happens in distempers of the soul likewise. There are certain traces and scars left on it, which, unless they are well effaced, will become sores, whenever a new hurt is received in the same part.

If you are once defeated, and say, you will get the victory another time, and then the same thing over again; assure yourself that you will at last be reduced to so weak and wretched a condition, you will not so much as know when you do wrong; but you will even begin to make excuses for your behavior, and thus verify the saying of Hesiod:—

“WITH CONSTANT ILLS, THE DILATORY STRIVE.”

XCVIII

CONSIDER which of your undertakings you have fulfilled, which not, and why; which give you pleasure, which pain in the reflection; and, if possible, recover yourself where you have failed. For the champions in this the greatest of combats must not grow weary, but should even contentedly bear chastisement. For this is no combat of boxing or wrestling, where both he who succeeds and he who

fails may be very fortunate or very miserable. But this combat is for good fortune and happiness itself.

What is the case, then? Here, even if we have renounced the contest, no one restrains us from renewing it, nor need we wait another four years for the return of another Olympiad; but recollecting and recovering yourself, and returning with the same zeal, you may renew it immediately. Even, if you should again yield, you may begin again. And, if you once gain the victory, you become like one who has never yielded.

Only, do not begin by forming the habit of yielding, and then, like quails that have fled before the fighting-pit, go about as if you were a brave champion, although you have been conquered throughout all the games.

For instance, we hear men say,—“I am conquered in the presence of a girl. But, what of it? I have been thus conquered before, and I am none the worse because of it.”

Another says,—“I am excited to wrath at times. But, what of it? I have been in anger many times, but I always get over it.”

These talk to us as though they had come off, unhurt. As if one should say to his physician, who had forbidden him to bathe,—“Why, did I not bathe before?”

Would not the physician answer him, thus,—“Well, and what was the consequence of your bathing? Were you not feverish? Had you not a headache?”

So, when before you railed at somebody, did you not act like an ill-natured person; like an impertinent one? Have you not fed this habit of yours by corresponding actions? When you were conquered by a pretty girl, did you come off with impunity? Why then, do you talk of what you have done before? You ought to remember it, I think, as slaves do a whipping, so as to refrain from the same faults.

“But the case is different; for in whipping, it is pain

that causes the remembrance. But, what is the pain, what is the punishment of my committing these faults?"

Just as each blow of the sculptor's hammer shapes the stone into a statue, so does each individual act form the soul of a man. Yet, the change in shape of the stone between any two blows of the sculptor's hammer, is imperceptible. So, is the change in your character imperceptible between any two acts of dissoluteness.

XCIX

HE WHO frequently mingles with others, either in conversation or in entertainments, or in any familiar way of living, must necessarily either become like his companions, or bring them over to his own way of living. For, if a dead coal be applied to a live one, either the first will quench the last, or the last kindle the first. Since then, the danger is so great, caution must be used in entering into these familiarities with the crowd, remembering that it is impossible to touch a chimney-sweeper without becoming a partaker of his soot.

What will you do then, if you have to discuss gladiators, horses and wrestlers? Besides, what if some one should sneer, or ridicule, or be ill-natured to you?

Are any of you prepared, like a harpist, who when he takes his harp and tries the strings, finds out which notes are discordant, and knows how to put the instrument in tune? Have any of you such a faculty as Socrates had, who in every conversation could bring his companions to his own purpose? Whence should you have it?

You must therefore be carried along by the crowd. And why are they more powerful than you? Because they utter their corrupt discourses from sincere opinion; while you

utter your good ones from your lips only. Hence, your words are without strength or life; and it is disgusting to hear your exhortations and your poor miserable virtues proclaimed up hill and down. Thus it is, that the crowd gets the better of you, because sincere opinion is always strong, always invincible.

Therefore, before wise sentiments are fixed in you, and you have acquired some power of self-defense, I advise you to be cautious in popular discussions. Otherwise, if you have any impressions made on you in the schools, they will melt away daily, like wax before the sun. Get away then, far from the crowd, while you have these waxen opinions.

It is for this reason that philosophers advise us to leave our country. Habitual practices draw the mind aside and prevent the formation of new habits. We cannot bear that those who meet us should say,—

“Hey-day! Such a one is turned philosopher, who was formerly thus and so.”

Therefore, physicians send patients with lingering distempers to another place and another climate; and they do right. Do you too, adopt other manners instead of those you grew up with.

Fix your opinions and exercise yourself in them. But, no; you go hence to the theatre, to the gladiators, to the walks, to the circus; then hither again, then back again,— just the same person all the while! No good habit, no criticism, no self-censure. No observation what use we make of the problems presented to our minds,— whether they be conformable, or contrary to Nature; whether we interpret them rightly or wrongly.

Can you say to the inevitable, that it is nothing to you? If you cannot, flee from your former habits. If you would ever begin to be anything, flee from the crowd.

C

TO THIS POINT you must attend before all others:— not to be so attached to any of your former acquaintances or friends, as to partake of their unbecoming behavior; otherwise, you will undo yourself.

If this thought comes into your head,— “I shall appear odd to them and they will not treat me as before;”— remember that there is nothing to be had for nothing. Nor is it possible that he who acts in the same manner as before, should not remain the same person.

Choose then, whether you will be loved by those who formerly loved you, and be like your former self; or be better, and not meet with the same treatment. For, if this last be preferable, immediately incline altogether *that* way, and let no other kind of reasoning draw you aside; because no one can improve while he is wavering.

Otherwise, this wavering will affect you in both directions. You will neither make a due improvement, nor preserve the advantages you had before. For, before by setting your heart entirely on things of no value, you were agreeable to your former companions. But, as you cannot excel in both styles; you must necessarily lose as much of the one, as you partake of the other.

If you do not drink with those with whom you used to drink, you cannot appear equally agreeable to them. Choose then, whether you would be a drunkard and agreeable to them, or sober, and disagreeable to them. If you do not dance with those with whom you used to dance, you cannot be equally dear to them.

Here too, then, choose which you will be. For, it is better to be modest and decent, than to have it said of

you,— “What an agreeable fellow he is.” — Give up the rest; renounce bad habits; withdraw yourself; have nothing to do with the wastrels.

But, if this does not please you, incline with your whole force the contrary way. Be one of the debauchees, be one of the adulterers.

CI

WHEN YOU cease to take pains for a little while, do not fancy that you may recommence good behavior whenever you please; but remember this,— that by means of the fault of to-day, your affairs must necessarily be in a worse condition, tomorrow.

The first and worst evil is that there arises a habit of neglect; and then a habit of postponing effort, and finally constant procrastination as to one's successes and good behavior and orderly thought and action.

Now, if procrastination as to anything is advantageous, it must be still more advantageous to omit that action altogether; but, if it be not advantageous, why do you not take pains all the time?

One says,— “I would play to-day.”

What then? Ought you not make the proper effort for it?

Another says,— “I would sing to-day.”

But, why not make the proper effort for singing? For, there is no part of life exempt from the necessity of making the proper effort for the particular task to be accomplished. Will you do anything the worse for taking pains, and the better by neglect? What in life is best performed by heedless people? Does a blacksmith forge the better by heedlessness? Does a pilot steer more safely by heed-

lessness? Or, is any other, even of the minutest human actions, best performed heedlessly?

Do you not perceive that when you have let your mind wander, it is no longer within your power to call it back either to propriety, or modesty, or moderation? But you do everything haphazardly; you merely follow your inclinations.

“To what then, am I to direct my efforts?”

Why in the first place to those universal maxims which you must always have at hand:— that no one is the master of another’s Will; and that it is in the Will alone, that good and evil lie. No one therefore, is my master, either to procure me any good, or to involve me in any evil; but I alone have command of myself with regard to these things.

But now, when you say, you will begin taking pains to-morrow, be assured that it is the same thing as if you said,—

“To-day, I will be shameless, impertinent and base. It shall be in the power of others to grieve me. I will be ill-tempered; I will be envious to-day.”

See, to how many evils you give yourself up.

“But, all will be well to-morrow.”

Then, how much better to-day? If it be to your interest to-morrow, how much more to-day, so that you may not again defer it until a third day?

CII

Now, you pay the penalty for neglecting philosophy. You tremble; you lie awake at night; you consult with everybody, and if the advice does not suit you, you think that you have been ill-advised.

You dread hunger, while you have plenty. Yet, it is not hunger that you dread, but you are afraid that you will not have some one to cook for you, some one else for a butler, another to pull off your shoes, a fourth to dress you, others to rub you, others to follow you; that when you have undressed yourself in the bathroom, and stretched yourself out, like a man crucified, you may be rubbed here and there; and the attendant may stand by and say,—

“Move this way, sir. Lie down on your side. Turn your shoulder.”

And then, when you are returned home from the bath, that you may cry out,—

“Does nobody bring me anything to eat?”

This is your dread:— that you will not be able to live the life of a sick man.

But learn the life of those who live in health,— how slaves live, how laborers live, how those live who are genuine philosophers. If you wish to possess the things that these men who live in health possess, you may possess them everywhere and with fearless confidence.

“In what?”

In the only thing that can be depended upon; in what is sure, and incapable of being restrained, or of being taken away,— your own Will.

Doth God grant me but few things? Doth He refuse me riches? Then, it is not His pleasure that I should live luxuriously; for He did not grant that, even to Hercules, who was ruler and governor of the whole earth and the seas, the expeller of lawlessness and injustice, the introducer of justice and sanctity.

Again, when Ulysses was shipwrecked and cast away, did his helpless condition at all deject him? Did it break his spirit? No, but,—

“As some lion, bred in the mountains, confiding in his own strength.”

Confiding in what? Not in glory, or in riches, or in

dominion, but in his own strength. That is, in his knowledge of what was within him, and what was without him. For this alone can render us free; and can raise the heads of the humble, and make them look with unaverted eyes full in the face of the rich and of the tyrants. This is what philosophy bestows.

But *you*, will not even set forth with confidence; but sit trembling about such trifles as clothes and plate. Foolish man! Have you thus wasted your time until now?

Stir yourself. Banish fear. Use the natural talent that God gave you, and you shall know neither poverty, nor fear.

CIII

WHY DO YOU fear poverty? Are you not ashamed to be more fearful and mean-spirited than fugitive slaves? To what estates, to what servants, do they trust, when they run away and leave their masters? Do they not, after carrying off a little food with them for the first few days, travel over land and sea, contriving first one, then another method of getting food?

And what fugitive ever died of hunger? But *you* tremble, and lie awake at night, for fear that you should want necessities. Foolish man! Are you so blind? Do you not see whither the want of necessities leads?

“Whither does it lead?”

Whither a fever or a falling stone may lead,— to death. Have you not then, often said this to your companions? Have you not read, have you not written, many things on this point? And how often have you arrogantly boasted that you are undisturbed by fears of death?

“Ay, but my family too, will perish from hunger.”

What then? Does their hunger lead any other way than yours? Is there not the same descent, the same state below? Will you not then, in every want and necessity, look there with confidence, where even the most rich and powerful of kings and tyrants, must descend? You indeed, may descend hungry; and they, full of indigestion and drunkenness.

But, have you not often seen a beggar who lived to extreme old age? Chilled by day and night, lying on the ground, and eating only what is barely necessary. The destitute seem almost incapable of dying.

What then is the case when God doth not bestow food? What else than that like a good General, He hath made a signal of retreat? I obey, I follow, speaking well of my Leader, praising His works. For, I came when it seemed good to Him; and, again, when it seems good to Him, I depart. As in life, it was my business to praise God within myself and to every auditor. So it is in death.

CIV

IT WERE no slight attainment, could we merely fulfil what the nature of man implies. For, what is man? A rational and mortal being.

All things are preserved and improved by exercising their proper functions; as a carpenter, by building and a grammarian by grammar; but if the latter permit himself to write ungrammatically, his art will necessarily be spoilt and destroyed. Thus, modest actions preserve the modest man.

On the other hand, the contrary actions heighten the contrary characters. Thus, the practice of immodesty develops an immodest character; knavery, a knavish one;

slander, a slanderous one; anger, an angry one; and fraud, a covetous one.

For this reason, philosophers advise us not to be content with mere learning, but to add meditation, and then practice. If therefore, we do not likewise habituate ourselves to practice upon right principles, we shall be nothing more than expositors of the abstract principles of others. For, who among us is not already able to discourse according to the rules of logic upon good and evil?

We mouth such words as,— “That some things are good, some evil, and some indifferent. The good include the virtues and all things pertaining to them. The evil comprise the contrary. And the indifferent include riches, health, and reputation.”

And then, if while we are saying all this, there should happen some more than ordinary noise, or one of the bystanders should laugh at us, we are disconcerted.

Philosopher, what has become of what you were saying? Whence did it proceed,— merely from the lips? Why then, do you confuse the remedies which might be useful to others? Why do you trifle on the most important subjects?

It is one thing to hoard up provisions in a storehouse, and another thing to eat those provisions. Whatever is stored is ready at hand, whenever you desire to show it. But, it is of no actual benefit to you, except in the mere knowledge that you have it. Whereas, whatever you have eaten is assimilated and digested, and thus becomes nerves, flesh, bones, blood, color, and breath.

For, what difference does it make whether you discourse on these doctrines, or those contrary to them? We are inconsistent with our discourse; we are far from practising what we teach; and also in what we pride ourselves on knowing. Thus, while we are unable to fulfil what the character of a man implies, we want to assume besides, that of a philosopher.

CV

WE ARE NOT to carry our training beyond Nature and Reason; otherwise we, who call ourselves philosophers, shall be like jugglers. For instance, it is no doubt difficult to walk upon a rope, and not only difficult, but dangerous. Ought we too, for that reason, to make it our study to walk upon a rope? By no means. It is not everything difficult or dangerous that is a proper training for the Will, but only such things that are related to the task that lies before us.

“And what is it that lies before us?”

To have our desires and aversions free from restraint.

“What is that?”

Not to be disappointed of our desires, nor to incur our aversions. To this ought our training be directed. For, without vigorous and steady training, it is not possible to preserve our desire undisappointed and our aversion unincurred. Therefore, if we allow our desire to be externally employed on things uncontrollable by Will, be assured that your desire will neither gain its object, nor your aversion avoid it.

And because habit has a powerful influence, and we are accustomed to apply our desire and aversion to externals only, we must oppose one habit with another. And, where the temptations are most treacherous, there oppose them with the force of training.

I am inclined to pleasure. I am averse to pain. I will bend myself, even unduly, to the other side, as a matter of training. I will strive and struggle with these faults, that I may cease to shrink from such externals. For, who is truly in training? He, who endeavors totally to control

desire, and to apply aversion only to things controllable by Will, and strives for it most in the most difficult cases.

Different persons are to be trained in different ways. But, what signifies it, for the training of the Will, to balance a pole, or perform other acts of the juggler? If you are hasty, man, let it be your training to bear ill language patiently; and when you are offended, not to be angry. If you would not be of an angry temper, then do not feed the habit. Give it nothing to help its growth.

Be quiet at first and count the days in which you have not been angry. I used to be angry every day; now every other day; then, every third and fourth day. And, if you miss it so long as thirty days, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. For habit is first weakened and then destroyed.

You, who have a weakness for pretty women, train yourself thus, so that you may be able to say,—

“To-day, when I saw a beautiful woman, I did not say to myself,—‘Oh, that I might possess her! How happy is her husband!’ Nor did I go on to fancy her in my arms.”

Well done. You have solved a hard problem.

But, if the lady, herself, should happen to be willing and give you intimations of it, and send for you and press your hand and place herself next to you, and you should then forbear and gain the victory,—that would be a triumph beyond all forms of logic. This is the proper subject for exultation, and not one’s power in handling syllogisms.

Thus, at length you may arrive at such a proficiency as, when one strikes you, to say to yourself,—“Let me suppose this to be like walking a tight rope.”

Next, train yourself to make a moderate use of wine, then abstain from gluttony, and finally, from women. Afterwards, you will put yourself to a test, at a proper season, to see whether these temptations get the better of you, as much as they used to do.

But, at first, flee from what is stronger than yourself. The contest between a fascinating woman and a young man just initiated into philosophy, is unequal. As the fable says, the brass pot and the earthen pitcher are an unfair match.

“How then, can I be successful?”

Be willing to approve yourself to yourself. Be willing to appear beautiful in the sight of God. Be desirous to converse in purity with your own pure mind and with God. Remember God. Invoke Him for your Aid and Protector, as sailors do Pollux and Castor in a storm. For, what storm is greater than that which arises from these perilous temptations, contending to overthrow our Reason?

CVI

NEVER PROCLAIM yourself a philosopher; nor make any talk among the ignorant about your principles, but show them by your actions. For remember, that thus Socrates also universally avoided all ostentation. And when some persons came to him and desired to be introduced by him to philosophers, he took them and introduced them; so well did he bear being overlooked.

So, if ever there should be among the ignorant any discussion of principles, remain silent. For, there is great danger in hastily throwing out what is undigested. And, if any one tells you that you know nothing, and you are not nettled at it, then you may be sure that you have really entered upon your work.

As sheep do not hastily throw up grass to show the shepherds how much they have eaten; but instead inwardly digesting their food, they produce it outwardly in wool and milk. Thus, do you, and do not make an exhibi-

tion before the ignorant of your principles; but show them by your actions the proper application of these principles.

We should have all of our principles ready for use on every occasion,—at dinner, such as relate to the dinner; in illness, such as relate to the illness; in a fever, such as relate to the fever.

Bear these verses well in mind:

“Let not the stealing god of sleep surprise,
Nor creep in slumbers on thy weary eyes,
Ere every action of the former day
Strictly thou doest and righteously survey.
‘What have I done? In what have I transgressed?
What good or ill, has this day’s life expressed?
Where have I failed in what I ought to do?’
If evil were thy deeds, repent and mourn;
If good, rejoice.”

We should retain these verses so as to apply them to our use; not merely to say them by rote, as we do with verses of Apollo.

In addition, remember the two principal rules of philosophy:—

FIRST, THAT THERE IS NOTHING GOOD OR EVIL SAVE IN THE WILL.

SECOND, THAT THE GOOD OF MAN LIES IN DEALING WISELY WITH THE PHENOMENA OF EXISTENCE.

CVII

SOME, WHEN they consider such maxims as,—“We should be steadfast,” imagine that they must remain immutably fixed to every decision that they have made.

But it is first necessary to know that the determination be a wise one. I agree, for example, that there should be

muscles in the body, but they should be such as there are in a healthy, athletic body. For, if you show me the convulsed muscles of a lunatic, and value yourself upon that, I will say to you,—“Seek a physician, man. You do not have muscular vigor. You are muscle-bound.”

Such is the distemper of the mind of those who misapply a good maxim. For example, there was an acquaintance of mine, who for no apparent reason, had determined to starve himself to death. I went to him the third day and inquired what was the matter.

He answered,—“I am determined to die.”

Well, but what is your motive? For, if your decision be right, we will stay and assist your departure. But, if your decision be wrong, change it.

“But, we should stick to our decisions.”

What do you mean, sir? Not to all of them. Why do you not begin by first laying a proper foundation, inquiring whether your decision be sound, or not; and then build your firmness and constancy upon that. For, if you lay a rotten and crazy foundation, you must not build; since the greater and more weighty the superstructure, the greater will be the fall.

Without any reason, you are withdrawing from us,—out of life. You are a man, a friend, a companion, a fellow-citizen, both of the greater and lesser city. And, while you are committing murder, and destroying an innocent person, you say,—

“We should stick to our decisions.”

So are madmen determined, too. And the more strongly they are determined upon absurdities, the more need have they of medical attention. Why will you not act like a sick person then, and get medical help from a physician? Say to him,—

“Sir, I am sick. Give me your assistance. Tell me what to do and I will follow your instructions.”

Likewise, in this case, say,—“I know not what to do. And I am come to learn.”

No; but you say,—“Talk to me about other things, for upon this I am determined.”

What other things shall I talk to you about? What is of greater importance, than to convince you that it is not sufficient to be determined, and to persist in a wrongful act? You have the vigor of a madman; and not of a man in health.

“I will commit suicide, if you discuss this further with me.”

Why so, man? What is the matter?

“I am determined.”

Then, I have had a lucky escape, that it is not your decision to kill me. Be assured, that with that very vigor which you now employ to kill yourself, you may hereafter have as an unreasonable a propensity to kill me or some one else; and again say,—

“I am determined.”

As in a distempered and rheumatic body, the illness tends sometimes to one part, and sometimes to another; thus it is uncertain which way a sickly mind will tend. And, if to this crazy inclination and bent, a spasmodic vigor be added, the evil then becomes desperate and incurable.

Eventually, with difficulty, this person was convinced to withdraw from his insane determination. But, there are some at present, whom there is no convincing. So, that now I think I understand, what before I did not, the meaning of that common saying,—that:—

“A FOOL WILL NEITHER BEND NOR BREAK.”

CVIII

THERE IS this assertion among the philosophers which may perhaps appear a paradox to many:—that it is possible, in all things, to act at once with caution and with courage. For caution seems in some measure contrary to courage. Let us fairly examine whether this assertion be true.

If, what has been so often said and so often demonstrated, that the essence of good and evil consists in the use of things as they appear, and that things inevitable are not to be classed either as good or evil; what paradox do the philosophers assert, if they say,—

“Where events are inevitable, meet them with courage, but otherwise, with caution.”

For in these last cases only, is caution to be used. And, if things inevitable and uncontrollable are nothing to us, in these we are to make use of courage. Thus, we shall be at once cautious and courageous, and indeed, courageous on account of this very caution; for by using caution with regard to things really evil, we shall gain courage with regard to matters that are inevitable.

But, we so often act like frightened deer, when these in fright fly from the plumes which hunters wave. Whither do they turn, and to what do they retire for safety? To the nets. And thus they are undone, by inverting the objects of fear and confidence. Thus, do we also. When do we yield to fear? About things inevitable. When on the other hand, do we behave with courage? About things that might be controlled by Will. But, where death, or exile, or pain, or ignominy is concerned, then comes the retreat, the flutter, and the fright.

Hence, as it must be with those who err in matters of the greatest importance, we turn what should be courage into rashness, desperation, recklessness, and effrontery; and what should be caution becomes timid, base, and full of fears and perturbations.

Let one apply his spirit of caution to things within the reach of his own Will, then he will have the subject of avoidance within his own control. But, if he transfers it to that which is inevitable, trying to shun that which he cannot control and others can, then he must needs fear, be harassed, and be disturbed.

CIX

“HOW THEN, shall one combine composure and tranquillity with energy; doing nothing rashly, nothing carelessly?”

By imitating those who play at games. The materials of action are variable, but the use we make of them should be constant. The dice are variable; the pieces are variable. How do I know what will fall out? But, it is my business to manage carefully and dexterously whatever happens. Thus in life too, this is the chief business, to consider and discriminate between events, and say,—

Externals are not in my power; choice is. Where shall I seek good and evil? Within, in what is my own. But, in what is controlled by others, count nothing good or evil, profitable or hurtful.

“What then,” said one, “are we to treat these in a careless way?”

By no means. For this, on the other hand, would be a perversion of the Will, and so contrary to Nature. But, we are to act with care, because the use of our materials is not indifferent; and at the same time we must act with

calmness and tranquillity, because the materials themselves are uncertain.

Where a thing is certain, there no one can restrain or compel me. Where I am capable of being restrained or compelled, the action does not depend upon me; nor is it either good or evil. The use of it, indeed, is either good or evil; but that *does* depend upon me. It is difficult, I admit, to blend and unite tranquillity in accepting, and energy in using, the facts of life; but it is not impossible.

CX

How DO WE act in a voyage? What is in my power to choose for the voyage? To choose the pilot, the sailors, the day and the hour. Afterwards, comes a storm. What have I to be concerned about? My part is performed. This matter belongs to another, the pilot. But the ship is sinking. What have I to do? That which alone I can do: I submit to being drowned, without fear, without clamor, or accusing God; but as one who knows that what is born, must likewise die. For I am not an eternity, but a man, —a part of the universe, as an hour is of the day. I must come like an hour, and like an hour pass away. What signifies it whether by drowning or by a fever? For, in some way or other, pass I must.

This you may see to be the practice of those who play skillfully at ball. No one strives for the ball itself, as either a good or an evil; but how he may throw and catch it again. Here lies the art, the nimbleness, and the skill.

But, if we catch or throw the ball in fear and trembling, what kind of play will it be? How shall we keep ourselves steady, or how see the order of the game? One will say,

throw; another, do not throw; a third, you have thrown once already. This is mere confusion, not a play.

Therefore Socrates, well understood playing at ball. And what was the ball he had to play with? Life, chains, exile, a cup of poison, separation from his wife, and leaving his children, orphans. These were what he had to play with; and yet he did play, and he played the game skillfully.

Thus, we should be careful as to the play, but indifferent as to the ball. We are by all means to manage our materials with art,—not taking them for the best, but showing our art about them, whatever they may happen to be. For, it is not death or pain that is to be dreaded, but the fear of pain or death.

Hence, we commend him who says,—

“DEATH IS NO ILL, BUT SHAMEFULLY TO DIE.”

CXI

Do you know what sort of a thing warfare is? One must keep guard, another go out for a spy, and another go to battle. It is neither possible, nor desirable, that all should be in the same place.

But you, neglecting to perform the orders of your General, complain whenever anything a little difficult is commanded. Nor, do you consider the influence you have on the army, in so far as it lies in your power. For, if all should imitate you, nobody will dig a trench, or throw up a rampart, or stand guard, or expose himself to danger; but every one will be useless to the expedition.

Again, if you were a sailor in a voyage, suppose you were to fix upon one place, and there remain. If it should be necessary to climb the mast, refuse to do it; if to run to the bow of the ship, refuse to do it. And what captain

would tolerate you? Would he not throw you overboard as a useless piece of goods and mere luggage, and a bad example to the other sailors?

Thus, also in the present case. Every one's life is a warfare, and that long and various. You must observe the duty of a soldier, and perform everything at the nod of your General. If possible, divine what He wants you to do; because there is no comparison between the Divine General and the one you now obey, either in power or in excellence of character.

You are placed in an extensive command, and not in any mean post. You are placed in a life-long magistracy, and your own life is your province.

CXII

YOU PERCEIVE that Caesar has provided us with a profound peace. There are neither wars nor battles, nor great robberies, nor piracies; but we may travel at all hours, and sail from east to west unhindered. But can Caesar protect us from fever, too; from ship-wreck; from a fire; from an earthquake; from a thunder-storm? He cannot. From grief, from envy, from love? No, not from any of these.

But the doctrine of philosophers promises to provide us peace from these too. And what do they say?—

“If you will attend to me, O mortals! wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, you shall neither grieve, nor be angry, nor be compelled, nor restrained; but you shall live serene, and free from all disturbances.”

Shall not he, who enjoys this peace, proclaimed, not by Caesar, but by God, through Reason, be contented, when he is alone, reflecting and considering,—

“To me, there can now, no ill happen. There is no thief, and no earthquake. All is full of peace; all, full of tran-

quillity. Every road, every city, every assembly, neighbor, and companion is powerless to hurt me."

He, who can have such thoughts, and can look upon the sun, the moon, and the stars, and enjoy the earth and the sea, is no more solitary than he is helpless.

CXIII

"HOW THEN, are some external circumstances said to be according to Nature; others contrary to it?"

Only, when they are viewed as isolated circumstances. For instance, I will allow that it is natural for the foot to be clean. But, if you take it as a foot which is part of the body, then it will be fit that it should walk in the dirt, and tread upon thorns. Sometimes even, it may be necessary that it be cut off, for the good of the body. Otherwise, it is no longer a foot.

We should reason in some such manner concerning ourselves. Who are you? A man. If then, you consider yourself isolatedly, it is natural that you should live to extreme old age; even though you may be afflicted with a contagious disease, which your neighbors contract and die of. It would also be natural that you should prosper at the expense of your fellow-citizens, even though they are kept in poverty and want, so that you may obtain your profits.

But, if you consider yourself as a man, and as part of the whole community; it will be fit that at one time you should be alone, at another time take a voyage, and at yet another time be wounded. Nor is that all. Sometimes, you may be in want; and possibly, you may die before your time.

Is it on this account that you are displeased? Do you not know that otherwise, just as the foot ceases to be a foot, when it ceases to function for the good of the whole

body, so do you cease to be a man when you cease to function for the good of the whole community.

For, what is a man? A part of a community. First, and chiefly, of a community which includes both God and men; and next of that village, to which he immediately belongs, which is a miniature of the universal city.

CXIV

THE GREATEST proof of ill success and misery is to hear a man say,—“I desire something and it does not happen. Who is more wretched than I?”

If you fix your desires on riches, health, power, honors, your country, friends, children,—in short, on anything beyond the control of your Will,—you will be unfortunate. But fix them on God, give yourself up to Him, let Him govern, let your powers be ranged on the same side as His, and how can you any longer be unprosperous?

But, if poor wretch, you envy, and pity, and are jealous, and tremble, and never cease a single day from complaining of yourself and God, why do you boast of your education?

A man's master is he, who is able to confer or remove, whatever that man seeks or shuns. Whoever, then would be free, let him wish for nothing, let him decline nothing, which depends on others. Else, he must necessarily be a slave.

If you take for your own, only that which is your own, and view what belongs to others just as it really is; then, no one will ever compel you, no one will restrict you; you will find fault with no one, you will accuse no one, you will do nothing against your Will; no one will hurt you; you will not have an enemy, nor will you suffer any harm.

For, whatever we anticipate with fear, we endure with

grief. And, for what will you any longer passionately wish? For, you have acquired a temperate and steady desire of things dependent on Will, and you have no desire for things uncontrollable by Will.

Let this be your aim; this your proof; this your conclusion; this your victory; and this your applause.

Relying for the future on these principles, walk erect and free, not trusting to bulk of body, like a wrestler; for one should not be unconquerable in the sense that an ass is. But, be invincible in your Will,—your desires and aversions,—as is becoming a son of God.

CXV

EVERY GREAT GIFT is dangerous to a beginner. Study first how to live like a person in sickness, that in time you may know how to live like one in health. Abstain from food; drink water. Totally repress your desires for some time, that you may at length use them according to Reason. If you do, then, when you are stronger in virtue, you will use them well.

No; but we would live immediately as men already wise, and be of service to mankind. Of what service? Have you been of so much service to yourself that you would exhort others? *You* exhort?

If you would be of service to others, show them by your own example what kind of man philosophy makes; and do not trifle. When you eat, be of service to those who eat with you; when you drink, to those who drink with you. Be of service to them by giving way to all, yielding to them, bearing with them; and not by venting upon them your own ill humor.

“What then, is it to be properly educated?” To learn

how to apply the principles of natural right to particular cases, and for the rest, to distinguish that some things are in our power, while others are not.

“Who is in a state of progress, then?”

Who is? He who has best studied an encyclopaedia? Why? Does education consist in having read an encyclopaedia through? If so, progress is confessedly nothing else than understanding a great portion of the encyclopaedia. Otherwise, we confess education to consist in one thing, and declare progress, which is an approach to it, to be quite another thing.

This person, they say, already knows everything in the encyclopaedia. His teacher says,—

“Certainly, sir, you have made a vast improvement.”

What improvement? Why do you delude him? Why do you distract him from a sense of his real needs? Why do you not show him the real function of education, that he may know where to seek progress?

Seek it there, O unfortunate, where your work lies. And where does your work lie? In learning what to seek and what to shun, that you may neither be disappointed of the one nor incur the other; in practising intellectual assent and doubt, so that you may not be liable to be deceived. These are the first and most necessary things.

But, if you merely seek, in trembling and lamentation, to keep away all possible ills, what real progress have you made?

“Where is progress, then?”

If any of you, withdrawing himself from externals, turns to his own Will, to train and perfect and render it conformable to Nature,—noble, free, unrestrained, unhindered, faithful, and humble, this is he who makes progress. If he has learned, too, that whoever desires or shuns things beyond his own power can neither be faithful nor free, but must necessarily be subject to others; if rising in the morning, he observes and keeps to these rules, and to

every subject of action applies the same fixed principles,—this is he who truly makes progress; this is he who has not labored in vain.

CXVI

GIVE ME, but one young man who brings this intention with him to the school, who is a champion for this point and says,—

“I yield up all the rest; it suffices me, if once I become able to pass my life free from hindrance and grief, and to look up to Heaven as the friend of God, fearing nothing that can happen.”

Let any one of you show himself of such a disposition, that I may say,—“Come into the place, young man, that is of right your own; for you are destined to be a credit to philosophy. Yours are these possessions; yours, these books; yours, these discourses.”

Then, when he has thoroughly mastered this first class, let him come again and say,—

“I desire indeed to be free from passion and worry; but I desire too, as a pious, a philosophic, and a diligent man, to know what is my duty to God, to my parents, to my relatives, to my country, and to strangers.”

Come into the second class too; for this is likewise yours.

“But I have now sufficiently studied the second class too; and I would willingly be secure and unshaken by error and delusion, not only when awake, but even when asleep; when warmed with wine; when diseased with spleen.”

You are becoming as a god, man; your aims are sublime!

